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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

FOUR YEARS IN VENEZUELA.

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DRIVEN SCENE VENETIANA

RECOLLECTIONS OF FOUR YEARS IN VENEZUELA

BY

CHARLES DANIEL DANCE,

A MISSION PRIEST IN THE DIOCESE OF GUIANA.

WITH A MAP AND THREE ILLUSTRATIONS.



HENRY S. KING & Co., LONDON.

1876.

203 . f . 521

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THIS LITTLE BOOK

I DEDICATE

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

TO

The Venerable D. Hyndman Jones, M.A.,

FORMERLY ARCHDEACON OF DEMERARA,

AND NOW COMMISSARY IN ENGLAND FOR

THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF GUIANA.

C. D. D.





P R E F A C E.

I have often wondered why so many books are written—some of them of scarcely any interest, I being the judge. And yet month after month new publications are advertised, and I suppose the books are sold, as according to a mercantile phrase “the supply is commensurate with the demand.” If I be asked why I have written, the following must be the answer:—I was ill. It seemed to me that my family would soon be left unprovided for, and I—infidel, that would not realise the fact that “*God Provides*,” was despondent. But a friend who had better sense than I, advised me to write. His advice was good; for the recollections of days gone by, and the increasing interest I took in the work I had begun—so absorbed my attention that I soon left thinking of my illness—and I recovered. This is my apology. May I hope that some at least of those who read

this my first book shall find not only interest and amusement in its contents, but even solace like my own.

Venezuela—the country in which the scenes and incidents, related herein, occurred, is too little known to English readers. Yet it claims and merits a better acquaintance, not only on account of the salubrity of its mountains and Llanos, or table-lands, the fertility of its soil, and the great advantage offered to settlers of small means and moderate energy; but also that the undying gratitude of the Venezuelans towards those brave English spirits who assisted them to throw off the yoke of Spanish tyranny should unite more closely the English speaking nations and these "*Free men of the South.*" Another act of brotherhood is yet to be performed—viz.—to teach these Republicans to govern themselves wisely.

C. D. D.

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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
FOUR YEARS IN VENEZUELA.

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL.

THE Gold Fever of California was at its height, when reports came of the discovery of gold at Upata, in Venezuela. The journey to the latter place was thought less laborious and expensive, and several companies were formed to proceed to the gold-diggings there. These consisted principally of inexperienced and thoughtless young men, most of whom had scarcely ever travelled beyond the streets of a town, and whose previous occupations unfitted them for the exposure, fatigues, and self-denial required for a successful issue to the project.

I joined a company, and had prepared everything that was thought necessary for the outfit. I

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purchased a double-barrelled gun, a large quantity of powder and shot, a pick-axe, cutlass, spade, a large blanket, and clothing for work, and had a dozen small bags made, to secure the gold when I got it.

About a week before our intended departure, however, I met with an old friend, M. de Montrechard, who had had considerable experience in California, and had also just arrived from Upata. This gentleman so impressed me with the utter absurdity of the project, that I endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to dissuade four of the company in whom I was personally interested. Failing to convince them I distributed my goods among them, excepting the little bags, at first, and lent them the small sum of money that I had intended taking with me. But they insisted on taking the bags also, assuring me that, although I had shown the white feather, one of the bags filled with gold, contributed by the four, should be my undeserved portion.

I went with the young men, on the morning of their departure, on board the sloop that took

them over the Parian gulf to Venezuela, each party warmly commanding the other to the guidance and blessing of God. I saw on board an old gentleman, who, having made the last fruitless effort to dissuade his son, embraced him and with tears in his eyes hurried away.

It was seldom that we in Trinidad received any authentic accounts of the gold works at Upata. Sometimes a flying report was spread abroad of their entire success, and then I blamed myself for listening to my dissuasive friends. At one time I got in conversation with a man who had lately arrived from the gold-diggings. His account was that some were pretty successful; several had died from overfatigue and starvation; but that the provision dealers were rapidly becoming rich. For himself, he must say that he had collected a good quantity of gold, but it had scarcely sufficed to pay his expenses, owing to the extravagantly high prices demanded at the *diggings*, and on the route, for all the necessaries of life.

Six months of uncertainty as to the well-doing or existence of the young men passed away, when

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one night I heard a knocking, and the sound of voices that made my heart leap. Descending, I opened the door, and my four friends entered in the following order:—two brothers, young Englishmen, were supporting a companion who had left England with them for the purpose of seeking gold; the fourth, who was a creole of Trinidad, and had left six months ago the picture of health and strength, was leaning on a long stick and limping, one knee being stiffened from a late abscess. They all looked the very ghosts of their former selves. I ran to the aid of one of those who was supporting the weakest. The effort he had made from the vessel to the house, with the weight of the other resting upon him, had completely exhausted him, and he was staggering to fall. It was well that I had then in the house meals to tempt their appetites; for they all at first refused to eat. Three of them drank several glasses of wine and then set to, almost ravenously, to eat what was placed before them. But one, he who was most ill of all, declined to drink on the plea of his pledge to a total abstinence society.

The next day we found him, whom we shall call the invalid, so ill and dropsical that Doctor Saturnet was sent for: he prescribed for the three, and in his direction for their diet recommended the use of brandy. But the invalid persisted in refusing to break his pledge. He was told that the pledge made exceptional provision for medical and religious purposes. His answer was, that so convinced was he of the injurious nature of alcoholic drinks, that, independently of his pledge, he would have nothing to do with spirituous liquors of any kind, under any circumstances. He was from Yorkshire, a capital draughtsman, and of a peculiarly religious temperament. He could not have been older than nineteen years. Two weeks after his return we followed his body to the grave.

All the gold brought over to Trinidad by my friends, valued by a goldsmith, I bought for two dollars.

The two surviving young Englishmen said that their failure and illness arose from getting to the diggings too late in the dry season. But if they had

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lost a good deal, they had, at least, gained experience, and were glad to have returned alive, for now they knew better than ever to dig for gold again. If they saw gold on the surface they would pick it up, but they would never again scratch an inch of dirt to seek it. As for the country through which they had passed, it was Eden, a Paradise of abundance of real, substantial, inartificial wealth, in the search of which there was the certainty of obtaining nothing less than health and strength and comfortable competence. They also said that many of the goldseekers who had had the wisdom to quit the goldfields before the wet season came on, and had attached themselves to the farmers, were hopeful and happy. They themselves would go to the United States of America, where they had previously lived for some time, and where they would earn enough to bring them back to Venezuela as settlers and farmers.

M. De Source, a gentleman connected with the press, had just obtained from the Venezuelan Government a considerable tract of land in the

district of the Apure to establish a colony. A company from France had also settled there for the purpose of salting beef for European markets. M. de Montrechard, a man of experience and forethought, also spoke favourably of a colony of farmers.

About this time I got acquainted with a Don Carlos Gerilleau, Spanish interpreter to the courts in Trinidad, and whose brother was Chief of Finance in Venezuela. Don Gerilleau lived in Venezuela, and came over to Trinidad at the sessions. He spoke English, French, and Spanish, fluently; indeed I do not know of what nation he was. His conversation, when he pleased, was agreeable and versatile; his smile was often pleasant; his laughter always harsh and unnatural.

There was scarcely anything that Gerilleau did not profess to know or to do, or had not known or had not done, or was not about to know or not about to do. He knew medicine, which, he said, he had studied in the United States, but came out short of a diploma; was ventriloquist, but had lost the power from desuetude; was mesmeriser,

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and professor of many other sciences. One night he attempted to exhibit his power of mesmerism, and would have me sit; but I declined on the plea that I was declared by two professors to be a bad subject, for I had denied their power over me, and had allowed them to test it without their obtaining any success. I, however, called in a little black boy that waited on me, and told him to do whatever the gentleman ordered him to do.

Gerilleau succeeded with the boy to his utmost wish, until I asked him, "Could he make the boy play on the harmonium?"

"Oh, yes; certainly."

The boy with his eyes still shut, and apparently sleeping, was led to the harmonium.

"Play," said Gerilleau; and the boy's fingers moved over the keys, and his foot worked the pedal, as I had frequently before allowed him to do.

"Will you please let him play a tune?"

"And is he not playing a tune now?"

"No," I said, "he is not; but will you, please, let him play God save the Queen?"

“Play God save the Queen,” said Gerilleau to the boy, with the greatest coolness.

“Hah ! hah ! ha ! heh ! heh ! he !” answered the boy, bending to the ground, holding his sides, and making towards the door.

“Come back here, Willie. What is the matter?” I said, with tears running down my cheeks from restraining my laughter.

“Beg pardon, sir,” said Willie to me, “that gentleman’s cut finger dancing before my eyes every time I open them wants to make me laugh; but I ’fraid you get vexed with me; but when he say, ‘Play God save the Queen,’ if I no laugh I burst.”

I bargained with Gerilleau that for a certain sum of money he would procure for me fifty acres of rich land, and assist me to get peons (labourers) to clear what of it would be required at first. We closed at this, and I arranged my affairs in Trinidad and prepared for the voyage.

It was in Gerilleau’s own sloop that we took passage. On board I found an American named Hills, who was introduced to me as Gerilleau’s

partner in the bullet-tree woodcutting trade. He was a young man of powerful build, as merry hearted as a child ; and yet a man of strong passions and determination, and not at all guided by any principles of morality. He was a creature of impulses.

The passage ought to have been very agreeable. It was a cool, pleasant day of sunshine and cloud. We had a good breeze, and the little sloop sped gaily over the gulf. Here and there a flying-fish would dart up out of the sea, and just skim the edge of the waves until its fins got dry and weary, and then drop into the water, or possibly into the open jaws of its pursuer. Porpoises came tumbling by the side of the sloop, and a large fish would rise to the surface to remind us that monsters dwell in the mighty deep. On board a sailor lad with the help of a hook and line was hauling up more fish than we could eat in a day. The American was pleasantly singing songs or relating tales of American or Band el O'este life. Gerilleau too sang sentimental love songs with cracked voice and unpleasant oglings, and told some very

good stories of wild bush life, and adventures in Venezuelan warfare.

But I observed that however pleasant otherwise, the American, when addressing his partner, always changed his manner to one of determined coolness, and spoke in a slightly sneering manner; for which he received from Gerilleau a reply either graced with marked courtesy, or snappish impatience. It was evident they were not friendly.

We dropped anchor that night on the shore of *Costa Firma*, as the Spaniards distinguish the mainland from the islands; although we were really on the shore of the island De la Brea. Next morning, we skirted the coast. The yellow mud-flat was dotted with innumerable flamingoes, elsewhere called curry curries (*phoenicopterus*), of a beautiful scarlet or flame colour when at maturity, but dark ash-coloured at first, changing afterwards to the purest white, and ultimately to red. Above the mud-flat waved the low dark green mangrove bush, useful in the process of tanning, and as firewood. And away in the distance, its

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summit touching the clouds, the blue Sierra de San Juan.

At the bocas, or mouth of the Guarapiche river, we passed a little island, and later arrived at the confluence of the San Juan and Guarapiche, where an island forms three cañas—Caña San Juan, Caña Frances, and Caña Colorado; and ultimately we arrived at La Ceiba.



CHAPTER II.

LA CEIBA.

LA CEIBA (silk cotton tree) is the property of an American merchant, residing in the city of Maturin, which is distant three days' journey up the river, or one day's journey by land. The proprietor deals largely in oxen, which are periodically driven down over the savannahs by a road made for the purpose. The two shipping places are the Embarcadero, a mile higher up the river, and La Ceiba, where vessels are ready to take the oxen to the neighbouring islands. Here are craals, or cattle pens, leading into each other, so as to divide the oxen when necessary.

The coming in of cattle is an exciting scene to strangers. First a rushing, roaring sound is heard at a distance, occasioned by the tramping of the oxen, which are, perhaps, arriving after a three to five days' journey ; then the cracking sound of the

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long whips is heard—these have handles of deer-feet generally, and the thongs are about five or six yards long. While you listen, the voices of the chief Llaneros, joined occasionally in chorus by their companions, resound in the forest—the distance and the woods lending an additional charm to the really pleasant music. And then come the droves (vacadas) of cattle (ganado) from sixty to several hundreds, running or leaping into the open pen. They look blown from the fatigue and want of food ; but it is to be seen that they carry heavy flesh and good fat.

There is a frank boldness in the Llaneros, or dwellers on the Llanos plains, that one sees sometimes among sailors or soldiers, as, having arrived, and their oxen penned, they advance with their double cobija, or cloak—which, inverted, serves as a red or blue one at pleasure—carelessly thrown over their shoulders, or tied sash-like over one shoulder, crossed to the side ; their oznaburgh trousers made short to the knees, and their travelling zapatos, or laced boots, each made of one entire piece of leather, leaving an

opening before the toes for ventilation and drainage, they salute you with a hearty Buenos dias.

The house at La Ceiba is a very large two-storey building, with a thatched roof of timitchi, or troolie palm. The posts are planted in the ground. The ground floor is, literally, an earthen floor; the second flooring and enclosures are of split manicole palm, and fastened together by bush twine. There is probably not a single nail used in the construction of this large wooden building; notwithstanding, it is the storehouse for heavy bags, bales, and packages of tobacco, hides, corn, cassavae bread, cotton, clothing and hardware. And withal, I have seen scores of chinchoras (hammocks), swinging with their inmates, who were singing their improvised songs to the thrumming of bandolas, or chaffing, laughing, and conversing. And, not unfrequently, I have had my attention directed to a large culebra, or snake, moving about the thatched roof.

The manager of La Ceiba is a black man of extraordinary height and good proportion. His

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wife is a Creole beauty, a brunette, with slightly tinted cheeks when excited, and with eyes as black and as expressive as one could imagine. In the dance, she is a sylph in form and motion. They are very hospitable, and, I think, very happy in their mutual love and respect. From intimate acquaintance with this Señor Vallivian's character, I have learned to regard him as one of nature's nobility. He is generally respected, as well by those who are of opposite politics, as by his own friends and compatriots. He has about twelve god-sons, strong Indians, who gladly work under him, and are proud of their padrino (god-father).

Padrinos and Madrinas (godmothers) are not, in some Roman Catholic countries, what I have seen of godfathers and godmothers in what are called Protestant countries. The pledge incurred by the former is generally faithfully fulfilled, and, as a consequence, a reverential feeling is held by the godchildren toward their sponsors, which continues throughout life. It is delightful to see the children, ay—the grown up people too—crossing their arms and lowering their heads respectfully

before the godparents, while these words pass between them,

Su bendicion mi padrino, Your blessing godfather.
Tienes, mi hijo, Thou hast it my son.

The general habits and necessities of Venezuelans do not require them to apply themselves to the cultivation of many exotics ; although the mountains of their richly productive country are suitable, by their temperature, for the culture of some cereals and many of the other vegetable productions of the Temperate Zone. But it is not so with the cultivators in the suburbs of Caracas and Cumana, who, enjoying the civilization of Europe, and being in constant intercourse with strangers, find a ready and profitable sale for their production of articles of food common to countries in the latitude of Europe.

The high customs duty charged on imported merchandise, and on money exported, amounts to a tacit prohibition of all foreign importation trade, and leads to a desuetude of foreign articles, and a dependence on home products—perhaps its best feature ; but it limits the supply of foreign

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goods only to the rich, for they only learn to despise home-made articles, and thereby materially cripple the domestic manufacturing trade ; it leads also to a systematic evasion of the duties by smuggling. Hence we see among the Llaneros or country people a pair of boots made in five minutes from two pieces cut out of a raw hide ; and the owner of substantial wealth in cattle and cultivated land, making his appearance in cheap uncouth shirt and short trousers, barefooted and barelegged ; and for a hat, a coarse kerchief.

The revenue also suffers, and in a way most disastrous to the country. The officers of customs add to their salaries by a percentage on the goods smuggled, with their connivance, into the country, and thus the method of raising a revenue intended for the promotion of good government, is made a source of corruption to which the integrity and fidelity of its officers too readily yield.

One is not surprised, then, to find the diet of the La Ceiba household all of home products ; and although many of the articles are new to a stranger, yet he soon gets to be accustomed to them, and

to enjoy the necessaries and delicacies of a Venezuelan table.

A call to dinner. The master and the wayfarers sit on benches and quaint old-fashioned home-made chairs, to a table covered with a clean cloth, on which rough pottery dishes and plates are placed. The food consists of thinly sliced salted beef, called tasajo, and fresh beef from the carcase of a gored ox. Fresh beef is a rarity here. When an ox is gored or too exhausted for shipment, it is sold for the value of the skin, that is, for two or three pesos of eighty cents each ; and for that day and the following, fresh beef is plentiful. The meat for dinner is boiled with pumpkins, sweet potatoes and beans, the broth of which, with pepper, is very excellent, and is called caldo. We have also fried tasajo beaten in a mortar, and overlaid with eggs ; and plenty of plantains boiled or roasted, cassavae bread and corn bread called arepa.

Before dinner I volunteer a grace in simple Spanish words, to which all respond, and the host looks pleased and thankful. He tells me that he

CHAPTER III.

CANA CARUTO.

I WENT up with Don Carlos Gerilleau and his partner to see their place, and to look at the land Gerilleau had selected for me.

Half-a-mile from La Ceiba the river turns with a sharp bend. Towards the western bank which forms the outer angle, there runs a creek into the river, and as the waters of the river and the creek meet with considerable force, an eddy is formed which is dangerous to light craft. Gerilleau's plantation was up this creek, which is called Caña Caruto; but at the point of land at which the caña meets the river, which in the lower part is called Caña Colorado, and throughout its length called El rio del Guarapiche, that gentleman had a small house of two rooms and a gallery.

The building looked neat at a little distance, and was well situated as commanding both the river

and the creek. It was wattled, and had a coating of mud overlaid ; but it had too few windows, was imperfectly ventilated, and was dark, damp, and dismal within. Buildings in the alluvial districts of intertropical America, and especially in marshy places, require to be of wood, at a good elevation from the ground, and with thorough ventilation. A trench was dug on the property, leading to the caña, with a koker or trapdoor, by which not only was the land drained, but a trap was formed by which the owner was enabled to eat fish with the trouble of only picking them up.

We had some fish for dinner, boiled with pepper and salt. The early part of the night was passed in agreeable conversation, chiefly concerning our plans and prospects. The two partners also talked of their principal work, which was the cutting and squaring of ballata or bullet-wood for the Trinidad market.

I fell asleep during this part of the conversation, which did not particularly interest me, the more inclined thereto as for several nights before I had not had much sleep. I was aroused after a while

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by the loud quarrelling of these two men, in which the words cheat and liar were frequently iterated on both sides, and threats expressed of shooting and cutting down. I begged them to keep the peace, and have respect for the drowsiness of a sleepy man, especially as they might take all to-morrow to settle their grievances, which I dared say needed only a little mutual explanations and concessions.

The next morning Hills got into the only corial on the place, that in which we had come from La Ceiba. His partner, who seemed to have been watching his motions, quickly went out and told him that the corial was wanted to carry him up the creek. Hills replied that he was going only to La Ceiba, and would either return directly with the corial, or send it on without unnecessary delay. They were both obstinate respecting it. To whom the corial belonged I do not know ; but I am satisfied it was not to either of them, and whether borrowed by Gerilleau or Hills I am also ignorant. They both appeared to possess very oblique ideas of right and wrong ; and the

vehemence of their indignation was no infallible cue to the justice of their cause. Gerilleau was in a great rage ; he stamped his feet, tore his hair out, and took up a large ballast-stone, and raising it with both hands above his head, declared that if Hills did not get out he would dash the corial to pieces. Below, for the tide was low, sat the American smiling ; but it was a smiling devil that gleamed through his eyes, when he took up his gun and said—"Gerilleau, it is no use, I shall have to shoot you ; but I would be ashamed to do so, only because you threw a stone at me."

I was disgusted and alarmed, and begged the one to allow the corial to go to La Ceiba, and the other to send it back quickly to enable me to see my land. This was ultimately agreed to, and within a quarter of an hour an Indian brought the corial back, and the three of us started up the Caña Caruto.

Why Caruto is called a caña—channel, arm, creek, unless it means the channel by which drainage is effected—is, to me, as inexplicable as why most of the tributary rivers in British Guiana are

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called creeks. The Caruto has its source in some swamps twenty miles up, draining eastward into the Guarapiche, and is nowhere wider than about sixty feet: while the Gran Lago de Guarapiche to the west of the Caruto, as large as the area of the Island of Barbadoes, drains westward as well as receiving on its western shore the river Aragua, which is fed by its tributaries the Pun Ceres and Quiricuiri. Numerous rivulets connect the river Guarapiche (which drains the lake) and the lake, and in the wet season the swamp unites them and extends itself to the river. The country on both sides of the Caruto is virgin land of great fertility, untouched but by the axes of Messieurs Vallivuin, Gerilleau, and Hills. The drainage into the creek is natural, and requires only the digging of slight drains and trenches. Twelve miles up there is a settlement of Indians of mixed Guaraunes (Waraus) of very unsettled and dissolute habits.

On our way up, a distance of eight miles, we saw several alligators on the mud banks, each about seven feet long. They remained basking

in the sun until we got nearly up to them, and then they lazily glided down into the water, leaving their trail on the mud. I have never since then passed up or down at day time, at low water, without seeing at least six alligators, all within the eight miles.

A great novelty to me, but not a pleasant one, was to have my attention directed to the snakes above head on the overhanging branches of the trees on the banks. Some would lie lengthwise on a branch ; others hanged down both ends with a double twist of the mid-body around the branch ; others coiled up on a forked branch ; any one of them liable to drop into our corial. I believe that snakes are not really vicious : they must destroy life to live, even as we do ; but they seldom attack men, unless their nests are endangered or they believe themselves about to be injured. They are led by the same instincts that guide the other animals and us. I passed unscathed within a yard of a yellowtailed labbaria once. He had probably heard my footsteps, and the better to watch me, reared himself upright to the extent,

perhaps, of half his length. As my attention was otherwise directed at the moment, he must have judged me innocent of evil intention, and therefore allowed me to pass scot free. Another time I was weary, and the inmates of the place I called at being absent in the field, I laid my cobija on an old door detached from its hinges, and lying conveniently parallel to a log, and fell asleep. I was awakened by a woman who rolled me off my bed. I thought at first she resented the liberty I took of sleeping on her premises; but I soon found out that I had been sleeping with a snake for my bedfellow, who had coiled himself comfortably by my side. He paid for his lodgings.

In a place abounding so much in snakes, I knew in three years of only two cases of injury inflicted. One was that of a man named Hippolyto, who, while hunting, met with some monkeys which scampered off, leaving behind one that was embarrassed by her little one. Whenever Hippolyto aimed, the monkey put forth its little one, as appealing, for its sake, for pity.

The man said that he stepped back to take a proper aim, as the monkey had shifted; but as he was about to draw the trigger he felt the bite: his hand wavered and he missed his aim. He saw the snake and killed it and took it home. His tongue felt heavy as soon as he was bitten, and he could hardly muster strength and determination to find his way home. His mother, who is a capital nurse, applied remedies. For several months his foot and leg were swollen. He recovered so as to be able to wear a canvas boot, but his foot remained somewhat deformed, and he always walked with a limp.

The second case was that of a dog. It was hunting an agoutie, and put its head in a large hollow of a tree. It very soon drew its head out with a sharp cry. In a few minutes its head was swollen. Remedies were applied, but for a day or two it was blind. It recovered in about a week with the loss of an eye. The snake, which was a bushmaster, was shot. It measured about eight feet.

The number of birds in this district is incred-

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ible. Here are powes, bush-turkeys, marudes of several sizes, wacharacas, maams, parrots of every kind, and smaller birds of infinite variety.

“Mira un venado! Mira un venado!” (Look at a deer!) And there, in truth, was a hornless deer; its beautiful eyes watching us in terror, or most likely curiosity, and then it started away into the bush.

“You may cut all here, as your means increase, if you please;” said Gerilleau. But he did not tell me, what I afterwards found out, that the concession was not his; that the government of Venezuela gave liberty to any one to cultivate public lands to any extent, free of charge, except paying, three years after cultivation, for the cost of survey and licence. Even these are not compulsory; the survey and licence being demanded by the cultivator only when he has built, or is expecting to build extensively, or cultivate cane extensively for the manufacturing of rum and sugar, or when he believes that there will be a competitor for the land.

We landed just opposite a very small tri-

butary stream, and walked a little way into the bush. Gerilleau described to me the nature of the soil, and the vicinity of the village of Caña Colorado overland. The hunting path shortened the distance to the village about seven miles; but it was generally more convenient to travel by water. We got again into the corial, after the dogs had chased some animal which we did not see, and crossed over into the little stream, up which was the water-way to the house. It was a pretty stream; its water of the colour of amber, owing to the vegetable deposits. It was full of fish, which we caught abundantly, with the aid of barbaco leaves, the juice of which stupefies the fish and brings them floating to the surface of the water. It could yield something else too, not quite so agreeable; for one day I threw out a fishing-line into the water and drew out a snake of a very deadly quality. At first I mistook it for an eel; but an Indian who was present undeceived me in good time.

The rancheria (dwelling) was a pretty good one. Gerilleau had taken much trouble to raise the

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earth floor ; and the sleeping room, which was enclosed with timitchi, troolie palm leaves, and not stuccoed, as was the house at the mouth of the caña, was cool, without being so damp. But Señor Gerilleau was never long at one place, and so his two houses always seemed cheerless and desolate.

Here I saw, for the first time, a South American eagle on the highest limb of one of the loftiest trees. Its wings were expanded, and, from its great size and picturesque appearance, aided no doubt by a little prejudice, I readily admitted it to be the king of birds. I saw two feet of an eagle, somewhat later, in a settlement up the Guarapiche. They were every bit as large as my hands, and the claws thicker than my fingers.

CHAPTER IV.

MY HOUSE AT CARUTO.

I OBTAINED two peons (Indian labourers) to clear a convenient spot of land, and to put up my rancheria. Christobal and Domingo, my peons, were Chaima Indians, from the mountainous district of Pun Ceres. They were engaged to work for three months with Gerilleau, who, according to a previous agreement, transferred them to me. They were intelligent and industrious men, and made excellent companions for me. I assisted them in clearing the under bush, and tried my hand at the axe in felling some of the smaller trees. We went together and cut timitchi, or troolie palm fronds, for the thatching of the rancheria, which was about 30 feet by 15. The pericarps, or seed bags of the troolie, served us for hats for some time after.

It is remarkable how correct Indians, of all

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tribes, are in the adjustment of their work. I have seen other men, mechanics, with plumb, rule, and level, fail in laying an accurate horizontal or perpendicular; but with the help only of their eyes, the Indians are invariably successful. This accuracy in straight lines, while it must always elicit admiration, will cease to excite wonder if we remember that, even with an imperfect bow, an Indian will pierce any given leaf on a branch 30 or 40 feet high. An Indian, in my presence, in an emergency, once took up a pointed stick and a child's bow, made from a part of the wooden hoop of a barrel, and pinned a large snake to the ground, just when it was crawling in an uneven course.

My rancheria was as pretty a specimen of rough forest architecture as one could expect to see in that locality. A drain was dug around it, which led the rain from the roof to the creek, a distance of some 70 feet, and the earth from the drain was laid on to elevate the floor.

While working with me, the two Indians and I spent happy evenings. Christobal was

especially amusing with his quaint drollery and emphatic manner, inducing one to believe he was jesting only, when, perhaps, he was in earnest. He and Domingo sang improvised songs to a cracked bandola, and told me tales, and listened to, and questioned me on the moral that I invariably added. If I spoke to them of the rivers and topography of their district, they would ask how I, who had never been there, knew anything of their country. If I spoke of trees as inhaling the bad air, and leaving the healthy air for us to breathe, Christobal especially would seem to be more astonished at my knowing that, who knew nothing personally of the bush, than at the novelty of the assertion. When I told them of the power of books, they were puzzled, and could not be made to understand it, only exclaiming in turns, *maravilloso*, admirable.

During one of our night conversations, and while our log burned brightly, and we were swinging in our chinchoras, Domingo stopped his swinging for a while, and was engaged throwing live coals to a toad which jumped forward at each

throw, and caught the bright coal in his mouth, dropping one to take up another. The toad must have mistaken the coals for fireflies, and was not deterred from hoping for better luck at each succeeding trial. Either it was desperately hungry, or marvellously cold-blooded.

“Where do you expect to go to when you die, Domingo?”

“Que se yo.” (How do I know?) he answered.

“And you, Christobal?”

“Quien sabe?” (who knows?) was his reply.

And almost immediately after, Christobal, who was always chief spokesman, told the following in substance:—

“All souls go to purgatory for a greater or less period, according to their impurity. Some leave their impurities in the fire, and rise up by the force of their remaining goodness, to rest with the Virgin in heaven. Others, like bad metal, never get purified, but remain for ever like dross in eternal fires. But some men, from the enormity of their crimes, are not allowed this chance, until they have been punished for ages in other

ways. Not too far from Pun Ceres, towards Cumanacoa is a place of torment for such men, the chief of whom is Lopez el Tirano. The flames ascend continually from the hill in which the souls of these men are confined. Others again are punished by severe cold in those dreary mountain wastes of *Los Andes de Trujillo*, the principal of which are the *Paramos de Volcan* and *Caldera*, the wilderness of volcano, and the wilderness of the caldron.

“But we poor Chaimas, who are not nearly as bad as the Creoles, may hope that we shall be happier than we are here, and have good land, and water, and fish and game ; and be under the immediate protection of the Virgin. Those of us who are poisoners and assassins, must, of course, take their punishment.”

“And what will that punishment be ?”

“Who knows ?” he said ; “perhaps they will be changed into wild beasts, and hunted into miserable places.”

On Saturdays and Mondays, too, my two peons went out hunting, and were mostly accompanied

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by the American, who was fond of the hunt, and seemed always happy with us. Those hunting days were jolly times. Not that I went with them ; I tried it once, but could not keep up in the bush with the others ; and then the prickles and bush on the ground tore and bruised my feet, and climbing plants destroyed my shirt, dragged off my hat repeatedly, and sometimes caught my trousers so awkwardly, that I was laughingly voted an incumbrance to the others, and ordered to remain at home to keep the fire up, and to practise on the lazy powes, and the snakes coiled up on the trees by the water side.

I said the hunting days were jolly days. There was no fear of the hunters returning without game, one, two, or three wild hogs, or a deer. Sometimes they varied the chase by stopping a caña, that is an arm or tributary stream to Caruto, by putting a matting of the frond stems of timitchi palms across a stream when the tide is high, and at low tide mixing its waters with the bruised leaves of a highly narcotic plant called barbaco, which sends the fish floating to the surface, as I

have mentioned before, in a state of lethargy. The smaller fish, the *arma duro* or armour fish mostly, are either placed in buckets or left unmolested. The larger ones are cut with a machete, or cutlas or hunting knife to make sure of them, and then hoisted out of the water. The two most appreciable kinds were the *morocoto*, called elsewhere *paccu*, I believe, noted for its fatness, the oil of which is saved in bottles for culinary purposes, and for the firmness and sweetness of its flesh ; and also the *curbinato*, a fish of great delicacy and lusciousness. These and other game are either salted and suspended to be air dried, or are placed on a framework of sticks called an *atroja*, with fire underneath, where they are barbecued. On one occasion I sent down to La Ceiba two buckets of live *armaduro*, called in some places *Hassa*, as a present to Mrs Valliviu.

My rancheria was now completed ; *timitchi* enclosing a sleeping-room, and the other part of the house open to three, at least, of the four winds of heaven. The Indians were engaged cutting the branches and junking the trunks of the trees.

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We had plenty of meat and fish, and an abundance of salt, but were unprovided with bread stuff. Gerilleau and Hills were short also of cassavae for the peons, who were cutting timber for them. Gerilleau therefore left his partner to look after the Indians, and went with me, along with my men, Christobal and Domingo, in a fine large corial that I had lately bought, in quest of bread in the village of Caña Colorado.

A cuenta of cassavae bread contains forty circular cakes of about 20 inches diameter, and is sold for eighty cents. These are brought from the cornucas, or farms, in the neighbourhood of Maturin, on donkeys—two cuentas on each side. They are then taken to an embarcadero, or shipping-house, and sent down to the caña in alijos or lighters.

The village of Caña Colorado contained about forty houses, all thatched and mostly wattled and plastered. The population consisted chiefly of the families of the skippers and sailors engaged in the export cattle trade, shopkeepers, and the staff of the custom-house ; in all, about 250 souls. The land is low, the river flooding the only street or

road in the village, at high springs, during the rainy season. Here, on Sundays, the men and women dress themselves and visit, and certain of the shops are crowded with card-players. There is nothing to remind one of Sundays, except the extra neatness of the people; no church bells; not even a little hut where prayers are heard. The manner of keeping the Sunday here is altogether too partial, sensual, animal. It seeks to benefit the body only. One needs the worship of the God of the Sabbath to make the day complete. But this is a digression.

Well, we bought our bread, and, at the suggestion of Christobal, I got two arrobas of tasajo, of 25 lbs. each, and a little demijean of white rum (*ron blanco*). We slept two nights in the village, and, starting early on the following morning, dropped down to La Ceiba, as being convenient for the tide, and returned to Caruto in the afternoon.

Gerilleau returned to his place to find that his partner, not tasting any himself, had wilfully destroyed three favourite white ducks, and given

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them to the Indians to eat, although there was an abundance of meat and other poultry at hand.

The two Indians and I planted corn and pumpkins, and plantain suckers in the area around the house. Their term of service then expiring, they desired to return to their homes, promising to come back whenever I desired to have the field cut and planted. So, taking their advances to bind them to the future work, with many hearty a Dios, we parted.

CHAPTER V.

BUEN PASTOR.

THE French company, formed for the exportation from Venezuela of salted meat, failed. The mode of salting was not found sufficiently complete to preserve the meat for any lengthened period, and the company had not capital enough to stem the losses sustained. One of the party, M. Edmond, determined to make this the country of his adoption, and took readily to the habits of the people. When I got to know him, he was already in possession of a plantation in Buen Pastor, the fertility of which he declared to be almost beyond belief. M. Edmond had inured himself to hunt without any clothing whatever, excepting the slip of loin-cloth worn by the Indians. He was a man of about forty years of age, tall and erect. His feet seemed so delicate, and were so well formed, that one could hardly reconcile their appearance

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with the known habits of the man, whose ambition seemed to have been to emulate the Indians.

M. Edmond was going to visit his place, and proposed that I should accompany him. We procured two Indians, and started early, so as to get before night-fall to a hunting rancheria (hut) raised by some Guaraoune Indians.

On our way we met with nothing except some chattering monkeys, one of which an Indian of our party needlessly shot, for we did not use the meat, although it is good, and said to be very sweet. The man skinned it, and pegged the skin on to a tree to dry, but, after all, forgot to take it away at our departure. We passed some powes on the way, birds as large as turkeys, with beautiful black-green glossy plumage, with bright yellow-and-black-crest. But it appears that hunters here are not willing to throw away a load of powder and shot on such game.

Arrived at the rancheria, we slung our hammocks, cooked our tasajo, and, with dry cassavae bread and hunger, made a comfortable meal.

Some good logs of firewood were brought in, and we had a cheerful fire for the night. M. Edmond, as most Frenchmen are, was a good talker, and, in company, always in good humour: but on several occasions I had surprised him in deep and apparently sad thought; and I had, somehow, got to believe that his good humour and hearty laugh often masked a heart ill at ease.

“ You must have often passed this way with more or less companions, M. Edmond,” I said, addressing him in French as usual when alone with him. For the Indians, although talking Spanish together, were conversing in so low a tone, with interspersed laughter, that I got to look upon them as not present.

“ Often,” he replied, and then continued to say, “ Sometimes with more than the present company, oftener with less; mostly alone.”

“ Your experience must be worth the hearing.”

“ Not at all; only the common one of travellers, exposure, privation, fatigue.”

“ You must have seen no end of snakes and tigers.”

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“Eh, well,” he said, “when we come to this bush and this water, we must not be surprised to see any quantity of such, for here is their domain, any more than we are surprised to hear that people live in cities. These are natural conditions. When I first took to this life I was always looking out for snakes and tigers; and I believe that they are either less numerous now, or that I now think less of them as dangerous neighbours. For the tiger, I do not consider him personally dangerous, as I suppose that, duly prepared, I am always a match for him. But he hunts my game, and in this he is like some people I know; he makes them timid and drives them away; although sometimes he drives them to me.”

“The solitude must have often induced peculiarly serious thoughts, eh, M. Edmond?”

“I never feel it, at least to any extent. After a week in a town or settlement of strangers, I return to these solitudes, as they are called, with a sense of relief from fatigue; and a few days in the bush, with an Indian lad for a companion, would dispel any disposition to a sense of solitariness.”

“ To consider of the end of one’s days in such a place would, I think, sometimes make one sad.”

“ Not necessarily more so,” replied M. Edmond, “ than to think of ending one’s days in a city, and in the midst of one’s family. It is not the situation so much as the death, the apparent annihilation of *the self, the ego*, that appals men. Even those who strive to build their hopes on Faith have but a confused conception of the future state of their existence. They know that the change is as radical as that of birth. Is it then a new birth, or is it instantaneous entrance to vigorous and mature life, a continuance of the present with the full possession of its memories and associations ? Thus they are perplexed or perplex themselves. But in life or in death are we not in the hands of the same Bon Dieu ? The unpleasant thoughts cannot change facts. ‘ Eheu ! quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam.’ ” *

“ But do you not yourself experience that gloomy

* “ Alas ! what laws, of how severe a strain
Against ourselves we thoughtlessly ordain.”—HORACE.

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feeling when thinking of death?" I said to him.

"My case," replied he, "may perhaps be peculiar. What to many is a bugbear is to me a hope of relief from memories which bring continual anguish. My present life is a purgatory;" and with a sigh he muttered, "May the next be a merciful relief!"

An ominous frown followed, which seemed to intimate that I had ventured as far as a prudent man could properly intrude into the privacy of another. We did not continue our conversation.

I was thinking of the motives that cause men to fear death, such as a dislike to change, a sense of unworthiness to submit to a rigid scrutiny by the impartial Judge; a weakness or aberrance of Faith. My thoughts wandered into a misty dream-land and I was asleep. Again I was in dream-land and shaking with terror. All the demons of my childish days' fears were howling around me. I was in the worst of company, and in the most wretched state of existence. Gradually I became conscious, and asked the Indians who were busily



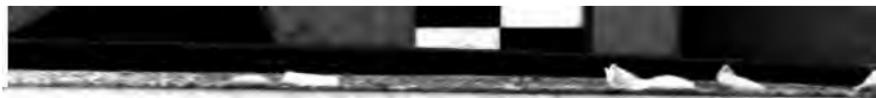
• 4



"LIONS AT MATING SEASON."

Say A. Ad.





THE DISTURBERS OF OUR SLEEP.

making up the fire:—"What is that?—Que es eso?"

"Los tigres," was the reply.

The noise of tigers had awakened me, and they continued with their horrid noise for several hours, sometimes near, and at other times away in the distance. I had heard tigers before in Honduras, but never for any great length of time; and then it was always one loud noble tone, with a succession of four or five tones decreasing in loudness and like the echoes of the first. But these were ramping and roaring tigers, maddened with wild passion, and ready for any kind and any amount of mischief.

I confess I was dreadfully afraid, expecting every moment to see half-a-dozen tigers rush in. It was their mating season.*

* Some years after my visit to Buen Pastor I saw a print taken from Heywood Hardy's picture of "Lions at mating season," with an extract from the Iliad that illustrated the situation:—

"Fierce as conflicting fires the combat burns,
And now it rises, now it sinks by turns."

In a gloomy night, illuminated only by the burning of the dry savannah grass, or made more dismal by the ruddy smoke, Humboldt's horses were frightened by the yell of an animal that proved

And there was M. Edmond sleeping with all the security of unconscious childhood.

In the tropics no part of a traveller's day is more pleasant and interesting than that from four to eight in the morning.

On caña San Juan it was most delightful: so calm and yet so cool. The soft brightness of the silent stars, always to me the symbols of heavenly purity and bliss, and the impalpable blending of sky and wood and water; the dead stillness of the morning, broken only by the monotony of the paddles striking against the sides of the corial; and, at long intervals, the deep baying sound of the *pajaro de perro*, the dogbird; the silence of my companions, whose apparently mere mechanical paddling might have led to a belief in their automatism, all tended to give an air of enchantment to the scene. The large forest trees, thickly binding the distant

to be a large jaguar that had roamed among those mountains for three years, carrying off horses and mules, and eluding the pursuit of the boldest hunters. He saw also another jaguar of prodigious length, "which surpassed that of all the tigers of India I had seen in the collections of Europe."—HUMBOLDT, *quoted by Milner.*

banks, might, as we glide along, be anything the imagination pleases—the walls of an enchanted palace—the ruins of a Rhine castle—or the merlonned walls of the morada (mansion) of a hidalgo of ancient Castilian pedigree—a chapel on a rock—or the ruins of a cathedral. And then the sombre reflection of the woods in the water, disturbed by the paddles, made hideous and fantastic forms. As the light increased, it was interesting to observe the fading away of the homogeneous colouring, and, as in a dissolving view, the blue of heaven, the green of the woods, the bright yellow of the clay banks, and the silvery whiteness of the placid Caña, all appearing more and more distinctly. Then the concert of birds began, and the business of the day was opened with gladness and general thanksgiving.

At eleven o'clock we stopped at the settlement of an Indian family and took breakfast, the usual tasajo and cassava with the addition of a fish, caught by one of our men, which we enjoyed. By this time the master of the place, who had gone into the bush before our arrival,

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returned. M. Edmond then had some private business conversation with him, and came to me directly, and with many apologies, told me that from information he had just received, it would be absolutely necessary for him to return to La Ceiba and prepare himself for an immediate start to Cumana; hoping at an early period to take me to his place. I expressed regret that our trip should be shortened, and with the trite remark that "business was business," and should be attended to, thanked him for the promised trip.

I said, I think, that the triangular island just at the confluence of the San Juan and Guarapiche, and the embouchure of these united rivers formed at each side a caña, one of which is Caña Frances. Just when we entered the caña an Indian put down his paddle and said, "escuche cairunes!" listen to the wild hogs! The corial was put ashore on the mainland, and M. Edmond with an Indian went with guns, while the other Indian, with his bow and arrow, and I were ordered to reconnoitre for the wild hogs that

might cross over the water and make for the island. We followed the sound of the wild hogs as well as we could, I of course agreeing with everything that my companion suggested or proposed. We heard four reports from the two guns, and presently there came the wild hogs, grunting and gnashing and plunging wildly into the water. There must have been at least twenty of them, large and small. We paddled in among them, and my companion knocked two on the head and took them in. I selected a rather small one, gave him a gentle tap just to take the breath out, and laid hold of him; but he gave me unmistakeable notice to quit my hold by showing his tusks; two or three effectual blows settled him, and I lifted him over. I don't know how experienced lion and gorilla hunters feel after a successful hunt, but I was exceedingly pleased at this my first and only success in wild hog hunting.

Our companions signalled us ashore, and we assisted in taking in five cairunes, one shot having killed two of them.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTRABAND.

WHEN I expressed the simple truism to M. Edmond that *business was business*, I was not aware that the male population of these parts consisted mainly of two divisions: one, the farmers and hunters as systematic smugglers; the other, paid officers of the government ostensibly protecting the revenue, but really coadjutors of the smugglers, aiding and abetting them by purposely appearing at the wrong place at the right time, or the right place at the wrong time.

Every merchant in Maturin and Cumana dealt in wholesale contraband; and when a gentleman and a don accepted the office and paltry pay of captain of the revenue guards (capitan de resguardos), it was understood that his fortune was to be made. A regular tariff was known to exist, stating the captain's share of the bribe, and the share of each

subaltern guard on duty for the day. The packages of merchandise destined for this trade were all of a size and weight to be carried conveniently, each by a man, through the bush, the stronger men sometimes taking two packs. They consisted chiefly of the costliest articles in linen, silks, boots, and cotton fabrics.

Sometimes a cargo was allowed to be properly reported and the duties paid.

For decency's sake, occasionally, a half-dozen bales of the least expensive articles, especially selected for the purpose, were allowed to be seized to evince the vigilance and fidelity of the officers.

The captains of smugglers were not always faithful to the understood arrangement. Whenever they could avoid the officers of customs they infringed the fundamental law of their class, "honour among thieves," by appropriating their own wages and the share pertaining to the guards, laughing at the powerless threats of those officers. With them honesty was only *second best* policy, and honour they knew only as a convenient word, as Shakspeare saith,

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“The mere word’s a slave,
Debauch’d on every tomb ; on every grave,
A lying trophy ; and as oft is dumb,
Where dust and damn’d oblivion, is the tomb
Of honour’d bones indeed.”

I had the honour once of being for four days, sole travelling companion of Juan Pinado, at one time reputed the most daring and dangerous of smugglers, and professionally a fisherman. He was now a respectable “resguardo,” revenue officer, and his chief work was to await about the embouchure and coasts, the expected return of the vessels, and in the interests of his confreres of the guards, more than of the government, prevent if possible, all independent smuggling.

Juan Pinado was a short thick-set Moreno (Indian and negro), very sun-burnt. He had a pleasant tone of voice. With the serio-comic manner which some old seamen possess, he could keep a company roaring with laughter, or with a quiet *nonchalance* make one’s blood curdle with his relation of daring and bloody deeds of which he had been actor or spectator. Although I shall never forget this man, nor rid myself of the peculiar

feelings always associated with his memory, yet for the life of me I cannot now remember any one of his narratives, owing, perhaps, to an attack of a three-weeks' fever and insensibility which terminated my journey with him.

The custom in river-travelling here is to secure, if possible, a comfortable night-lodging in an inhabited rancheria, where the inmates are always glad to talk with passers-by of the gossip of the district and the state of the market. It is especially pleasant to be fellow-sojourner for the night with the crew of one or more alijos, or lighters, taking cargo up to Maturin. In such case, after the usual salutations and conversation, the hostess invites one or other of the company to produce his bandola: coffee and cassava are served, a quota sometimes of sugar or coffee, or whatever might be wanted to complete her cheer, coming from the boats. Singing commences, and sometimes a dance by one or two men, often the host and hostess joining.

With Juan Pinado, or, as he was called, Juan Pinao, it was not the rule, but the exception. We

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either passed good places at evening, or came to them at early morning, sleeping three nights out of the four on the banks of the river, our chinchoras suspended from two trees. I think Juan Pinado was taking despatches to Maturin : but he made the journey as long as he could, that he might catch fish to sell to the towns-people, it being Lent. The fish he caught were salted, and dried in smoke.

One morning we had the brain of the sting ray, rayo, with cassavae bread for breakfast, and a very delicious breakfast it was. It was prepared with black pepper, salt, onions, and garlic chipped up and mixed with a wheaten biscuit pulverised. Pinado's possession of these condiments surprised me ; they proved him to be both an epicure and an experienced traveller. The mixture was well wrapped up in casipo, or a kind of wild plantain leaf, and tied with a string made from its bark, then placed under the hot ashes of our fire.

His gun belonged to the government. It was a rare specimen of the antique, a flint piece, one of a quantity of military stores, which being found

unserviceable to the English, were by them sold to the Venezuelanos. It must have been in revenge for my thoughts of it that the old musket nearly kicked my arm off when I attempted to shoot a tough old macaw that was perched overhead.

I shall never forget my third night with Juan Pinado. We had cooked and ate our dinner, and retired to our chinchoras and slept. At about eleven o'clock, the rain fell and put out our little fire. I covered myself with the cobija or cloak, but the rain continued pouring down my neck and up my legs. I got up and found Pinado quietly sitting on his chinchora, which he had made into a bundle. I did the same. And with our hands supporting our chins, and elbows resting on the knees, we faced each other and nodded and nodded till daybreak, the rain pouring down upon us all the time. I arrived in Maturin that evening with a roasting fever, and was laid up for three weeks insensible to everything or person around me.

I had also the pleasure of travelling on foot to

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Pun Ceres in company with another guard of the revenue, who seriously proposed to enter into co-partnership with me on the following terms:— I was to import the goods, and he would secure the nonpayment of duties both to the government and to the faithful servants of the customs. He would also undertake, through agents, to exchange the merchandise for tobacco, starch and corn.

It was, I believe, to one of the smuggling expeditions that M. Edmond as captain was recalled, when we so suddenly returned from our voyage to Buen Pastor.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE GUARAPICHE.

THE time of the year having arrived when, in these places, it is thought most favourable to clear the forest for the purpose of sowing corn ; I determined to go in quest of Christobal and Domingo, who had promised to return, and to bring other labourers with them, and had taken a considerable advance in cutlasses, guns, powder, and shot, knives and clothing. For this purpose I engaged a passage at the village, in a small corial in which two men were going to Maturin. The corial was much overladen, and I was almost afraid to trust myself and my two small canisters in it. But as the men seemed confident, and I have always allowed every man to know his own business best, I was reassured ; and so shaking hands with the alcalde or jefe politico as he was usually called, Don Mexia, I entered and we started.

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That afternoon we stopped at the first cornuca, the next one being quite a day's journey off. The proprietors were a very respectable family of Spanish blood, unmixed with Indian. My fellow passengers seemed quite at home, which might arise from the intimacy of frequent calls as they passed up and down the river, or from a sense of independence arising from the ease of making a living here, and the republican nature of the government. I perceived the same free-and-easy way of intercourse between people of dissimilar stations, in the United States of North America.

A cornuca, perhaps a contraction for cornucopia, is a farm on which provisions are grown, and pigs and poultry raised. A hacienda is a cane, cacao and coffee plantation, with factory and machinery for the manufacture of sugar, chocolate and coffee; the latter two articles being chiefly prepared and sent out in the berry state. A hato is an extensive cattle farm.

The second night we stopped at a new cornuca, the owners of which, man and wife and his sister, were old acquaintances of mine in the Caña. They

were, like Christobal and Domingo, Chaima Indians, the most civilized of all the Indians I have seen to this day. Generally, they are as fair in complexion as the offspring of European and Arawak parents, sometimes fairer, well formed in every part, and known to strangers as Indians only by their own declaration, and by a more subdued manner than that of Creole Spaniards. The majority of the population of Pun Ceres, including the rivers tributary to the Gran Lago, and to Rio San Juan, are of this tribe. I can attribute their advanced state only to the care of the Roman missionaries in the days of the Spanish dominion, improved and strengthened by their commercial association with the citizens of Maturin and Cumana.

The rancheria of my Chaima friends in their new cornuca was of the usual kind, and very commodious, with sleeping apartments for the family. The assistant labourers and strangers, as usual, slung their chinchoras in the open part of the building.

The river here runs with great force, there

being no tide. The current is especially strong at the bends of the river. On the third day, we were going on very comfortably ; I had become accustomed to the crankiness of the little corial, and my companions were communicative and agreeable. We had just decided that, after we had passed the next bend, we should land on a sand bank, search in the sand for the eggs of terraquai (land and water turtles), for which this was the season, and cook our breakfast. But on turning the bend, just where the river ran with force, he at the head of the corial espied a snake, which had probably got in during the night, crawling from between his feet. The man's sudden motion, jumping on a package to avoid the snake, and perhaps also to get a cutlass or stick, caused the corial, first to swing round with the current, losing the force of the Bowman's paddle, then to capsize, and as it was made of hard, heavy wood, it sank.

I am not a bad swimmer, so after recovering myself from the ducking and rolling, struck out, and got to a large stump of a tree, at which my

companions had already arrived. There was not a single article in the corial saved. One of my canisters contained a few articles of clothing and papers, the other held cassavae bread and tasajo for the voyage. I was much chagrined at my loss, and could not understand the *sang froid* of my companions at the serious loss we had sustained, till I gathered from them that they had been already paid to take up the corial of goods to Maturin, and had incurred no responsibility.

Fortunately, we were within hail of the buildings of a hacienda, and a corial was sent for us.

The owner of this estate, M. Griselle, was a French Creole, of one of the West India Islands. His wife, a Creole Spaniard, was now two years dead. There were several sons and daughters, nearly all grown up; and they seemed, especially the elders, to have been well trained. M. Griselle's two eldest daughters were at their father's town house in Maturin. The sons assisted the father in the working of the estate, on which they made rum, and also white sugar. The sugar was in blocks, of the size and shape of

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bricks. It was very inferior in quality, owing, I think, rather to the inefficiency of the machinery than to the want of skill. They had also cocoa, which was largely cultivated, and, when picked, was dried on a terrace having a locomotive roof, which ran on rails, to cover the cocoa nibs, when necessary, from the rain and dew, and also to expose them to a partial sunning. The rum, when made, is colourless. It is put into small barrels, or kegs, of about 25 gallons capacity, and sent away to the town on donkeys. It is not the custom here to poison* rum with colouring and other mixtures, that it might have the name of old Grenada and old Jamaica. There is only one man in Maturin, a French Creole, who possesses the knowledge of rum adulteration. Using the advantage which his scientific civilisation affords him, he makes, in a minute, old rum, gin, brandy,

* On all sugar estates, rum is coloured either by being placed in puncheons previously burnt inside by a quick fire, or by the application of burnt sugar.

But in many of the common retail spirit shops, unprincipled dealers add to the rum a quantity of water, and, to amend its consequent weakness, add sulphuric acid, or other powerful and injurious matter.

cherry cordial, and almost any liquor that the simple Llaneros call for, from the pure white rum which they themselves, perhaps, helped to take from the donkeys' back a few minutes before.

It must not be thought, however, that drunkenness is a crying sin of this people. Indeed, it is difficult to say what is their besetting sin, except it be a disposition to bloodshedding at their presidential elections; for they bear favourable comparison morally with any of the French and English creole populations of the West Indies, although they may be more ignorant of the theory of religious doctrine, and less pretentious in their profession of sanctity. I venture to say that in no part of Spanish Guiana would the brutal spectacles be seen which daily disgrace the capital of British Guiana.

M. Griselle kindly forced me to exchange my wet clothes for a suit of his; and reminded me of the French saying, that "good fortune and bad are equally necessary to man, to fit him to meet the contingencies of life;" and of Rous-

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seau's inspired words, "we do not know what is really good or bad fortune."

I observed his hand in a sling, and he told me that he was a martyr to rheumatism.

"Why don't you try the *water-cure*, M. Griselle?"

"What is that?" he answered.

"Wrap a wet cloth round the arm, and cover that with dry flannel, and thus gently steam the arm with its own natural heat."

"Do you think I am mad?" he said, laughing. "Why, I have just persuaded you to get rid of your wet clothes to avoid rheumatism, and here you are in return advising me to put wet cloths on my arm to cure rheumatism."

"What then," I said, "do you apply as remedy?"

"White rum, well rubbed in, with salt."

M. Griselle asked me to take some rum, which I gladly accepted; but was sorry to see him preparing to take some too: for I believe the drinking of spirits to be injurious to rheumatic subjects. "I see, Monsieur, that you use rum

otherwise than rubbing in with salt. I don't wonder that your rheumatism continues."

I slept that night at the hacienda, and on the morrow, after breakfast, he shook me heartily by the hand, and begged me not to forget to call at his town house and introduce myself to his family. I would at least meet one I had seen before, he said, taking the hand of his little daughter, who was going into town that afternoon. One of the young men passed me over the river in the estate's corial. I then walked a little way up a bushy ascent, got through about five miles of savanna, made another ascent, and entered the town of Maturin.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WAKE.

I STOPPED at the Compondron's house, a family with whom I had lodged when I became ill after travelling with Juan Pinado.

At night I could get no sleep till long after midnight. One of the Compondron's grandchildren was dead, and their friends were keeping up the wake. The little body was laid out in a corner of the house, with a number of lights around it, according to the usual custom of Roman Catholics. A tall old Moreno minstrel was thrumming a bandola and singing, and the company were dancing. The mother of the dead was among them, dreamily going through the figures—*dragged through*, I should say. And as her eye caught the muffled corpse of her first and only child, she would burst out crying. It was melancholy and incongruous to see this broken-

hearted mother dancing a Spanish jig over the dead body of her child, and to think of the discord of the joy-stirring music of the minstrel, and the heart-wails that were issuing from the bereaved mother. Whoever introduced this custom must have thought with Hood :—

“There’s not a string attuned to mirth
But has its chord in melancholy.”

Old Compondron was a hearty, hale man of seventy years, of almost Herculean size and strength, whose joyous and full-sounding laughter would dispel melancholy, if anything could. It was pleasant to hear the full-toned music of his voice as he told, in the beautiful Spanish language, of the days of Republican warfare against Spanish sovereignty ; of fresh European soldiers, lost in the woods, dying from starvation or from the freezing chills of the dreaded Paramos, the calenturas of the miasmatic swamps, and the sunstrokes on the unsheltered savannas ; of the harassing guerrilla attacks of the undisciplined but patriotic natives, who were accustomed to the fatigues and privations of travelling,

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and knew, one or other of them, every inch of the ground; of the privations of the patriots themselves, who were often glad to eat the carcases of their dead horses and asses, to soak the leather of their saddles and cook it for meat, and to eat snakes even, in the absence of other fare. He spoke also of the mutual cruelty of the contending parties, who gave no quarter whatever. "Era guerra a la muerte." It was a desperate effort, on both sides, of war *à outrance*.

And then he told of the gallant actions of the noble youths of both countries, and of achievements on both sides that merit a record.

And his mind becoming, perhaps, more attuned to the sorrowful occurrence in the house that day, he spoke of the spirited self-denial of the women in their day of trial: their encouragement of the flagging spirits of many a patriot son and husband; and the cruelties and outrages to which many of them were subjected. "Era," said the old man, "tiempo por ellas de prueba fogosa." It was for them a time of fiery trial.

The Venezuelans speak in high terms of the

English. Too early after my recovery from the fever, brought on by exposure in company with Juan Pinado, I ventured to travel through the Savannas, having miscalculated my strength. I was wearily dragging on my footsteps when the sight of a hato revived my drooping spirits. I called and desired some milk. A woman came out and invited me, kindly, to enter and sit down. The milk was at hand and brought to me, which I drank greedily, and thanking her I began to offer payment. The good woman refused it, and said that she was sorry for her old mistress' sake that she was absent in the town: "For," said she, "I can tell by your speech that you are English and not French, and my old mistress, who can speak your language, is seldom more happy than when she can show civility to your countrymen." I am a native of Jamaica, but it was all the same. She continued telling me that in the time of the War of Independence her mistress had seen much of the English volunteers, and that her life and property were rescued by them. Her husband, who had long died, had fought side by

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side with them, and frequently in his happy moods spoke also of their dashing bravery and kindness.

I had not waited long before the woman asked me to excuse her and to make myself at home ; and she passed in and out of the apartment, each time making some pleasant remark. After a while she spread a clean cloth on a table, and having brought in a broiled chicken, fried eggs and bacon (tasajo of pork), and cassavae bread, she bade me eat, continuing to chat and laugh while I ate.

A lad of about eighteen years of age came peering in at the door, whom she called and presented to me as her younger son, and, after dinner, complaining in a half-scolding but not unpleasant manner, she told me what a good boy he was—“ but such a dunce ! He hated nothing but a book ! ”

Finding on enquiry that there was a book in the house, I encouraged the lad to read and spell a little, and to copy some writing, glad that in this small way I was seeking to reciprocate the kindness of his mother's hospitality.

On mentioning at Compondron's house that night that I wished to proceed to Pun Ceres, a young man of the wake-party offered to accompany me, as he had, he said, to transact some business there. I had seen him acting as a revenue guard in Caña Colorado; and he reminded me of the fact. I did not know until some time after that he suspected that I intended to smuggle, or was engaged in some contraband trade; and that his principal object in accompanying me to Pun Ceres was to make money out of my breach of the revenue laws, either as my accomplice, or in his official capacity. We arranged to start the day after the next, and he received a peso of eighty cents to purchase food for our route.

On the morning I dressed myself in M. Griselle's shirt and my own trowsers, as his were uncomfortably large around the waist, and purchasing a straw hat for dos reales y medio, a quarter-dollar, I went to visit Las Señoritas Griselle.

When I found the young ladies so superior to the women I had seen in the Caña, with the

exception of Mrs Valliviu, who compares favourably with the best of women, I felt a little ashamed of my straw hat, and shirt and trowsers, and bootless feet. But the good breeding of the two young ladies shamed out the feeling of shame. They soon made me to feel like an old acquaintance. I talked to them in broken Spanish, putting in a French word when my Spanish failed.

“They were always glad,” they said, “to welcome los Franceses, not altogether for the affection in which they held their father; but the French were always so polite and well-bred.”

I had not sufficient courage to say I was not a Frenchman.

“Los Ingleses,” they continued, “on the contrary were so cold and supercilious, imperioso; and although they were kind and good when one got to know them, yet they did the best thing in an ungracious manner.”

One of these young ladies was affianced to a Frenchman.

The little girl whom I had seen at her father’s hacienda came running in, and seeing me offered

her hand to shake. She claimed me as an old friend, and began afresh to introduce me to her sisters as "the poor man to whom papa had given *this very same shirt*."

This brought forth some accounts of upsets that the ladies had had in the river, for they sometimes forded it on a donkey, having to lift their feet on to his back, which, they said, made them very liable to an upset. One sister told me that their donkey had a very mischievous trick of squatting in the river, without any consideration whatever for the rider; and for that reason they always preferred the corial in passing over to the town-side.

I was very pleased with my visit, and told them that I was indebted to my misfortune for this good fortune; and promised to see them again on my return from Pun Ceres.

CHAPTER IX.

PUN CERES.

EARLY next morning my companion for Pun Ceres was ready. We descended to the river and forded it, not higher than the hip, and then got into a pleasant, quiet country of low trees and wild flowers. At ten o'clock we arrived at a grazing farm on a savanna. We met the owner, who took not the slightest notice of me. Nor did he seem to regard my fellow-traveller with much attention. He was dressed in the usual country style ; a common kerchief on his head, short trowsers, loose shirt or jumper, a leathern girt, and a long knife suspended in a case by his side. The horse he rode was a magnificent one, and seemed to me a nobler animal than his master. The comparison recalled to my memory the story of Lemuel Gulliver's experiences in the country of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos. Perhaps my

being hungry and not invited to eat sharpened the resemblances.

I have since schooled myself into not despising a man for any apparent trait in his character, which may at the time seem unamiable, and even improper; because it may not be natural to him, but practised and persevered in even against the impulses of his own disposition, for some reason laudable, but to me inscrutable. For instance, how unjustly am I acting by blaming a man's meanness for not asking me to breakfast, when all the time he is suffering, and contending with his feelings of hospitality, from want of means. I was unjust once to a gentleman in another country, who, knowing that I passed his place once-a-week to bathe at a cascade half-a-mile off, kindly invited me to call in and take a cup of coffee always after my bath. The next week I went to the cascade with two companions, and on our return, I mentioned the invitation, and asked them to come in with me. Mr F—— received us coldly, I thought, and did not offer us even a glass of water. Of course, when I and my companions left the house

we abused him roundly. But the matter was put in quite a different light when on meeting Mr F—— a few days later, he smilingly observed, —“I can always afford a cup of coffee to my friend; but not always to my friend’s friends.” I saw at once that I had acted presumptuously, and I apologised.

We did not remain longer at the hato, or cattle farm, than to roast some tasajo.

After crossing a rivulet we entered a forest, and continued our journey until we got to a beautiful stream. On the other bank was a hill which had the appearance of a neglected cultivation. We sat down and ate our breakfast, after which the revenue guard stretched himself out and began to sing one of the improvised songs peculiar to his people. Some one from the hill, hearing his voice (he sang sweetly) recognised him, and came down to talk with him. He seemed so glad to meet his friend, that he instantly rose up, and requesting me to await his return, crossed the stream and ascended the hill in company with the other.

“Solitude is sometimes best society,” and I felt it so now; for after a comfortable bath, I sat down and listened for the first time to the notes of the campanero, or bell bird, as they rang through the forest, reminding me, I know not why, of the quiet parish church in my younger days; then of the fond cares of a loving mother; then school-days and the pleasure that the lads would have had to have been here with me; forgetting that all are not like schoolboys who have counted twenty-five years. The music of the clear water rippling over the pebbles, and the seeming haste of the little stream to mix with the large and murky river, reminded me of my own youthful, hopeful aspirations to mix with men in this great world; and I sat half-pleased, half-sorrowful, musing on the effects of that same great world on my erst young and pure mind. What connection can a sunbeam, can sounds new and strange, have with old and familiar thoughts? Cowper gives expression to the fact without assigning the cause:—

“There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And as the mind is pitched, the ear is pleased

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With melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave ;
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies."

Here too the poet might have had his wish gratified when he sighed—

" For a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful and successful war
Might never reach him more."

The guard now returned, skipping down the hill-path, and when he heard how I had spent part of the time, he asked to be allowed to bathe while I slowly wandered onwards. That afternoon we got to another hato, and I was glad to see women and children there. They had just completed their dairy-work for the day, and were packing queso á mano, and queso á cinto. The master of the house soon got from the guard all that he knew of me, which was not overmuch. I got near to the old lady and tried to amuse her with the relation of things new and strange, and succeeded in getting many hearty laughs from the younger people, and "valga me Dios" from the

older ones. I believe, however, that some of the laughter arose from my imperfect Spanish: but they were too kind-hearted to say so. They offered us coffee *sin leche*, because they were themselves, I suppose, sick of milk; but I told them, that if they pleased, I would rather have some milk *sin cafe*, for coffee would disturb my sleep. They placed milk before me, and fried *tasajo* with eggs. There was also corn bread which I did not so much like as good cassavae bread.

Before we retired to our hammocks, our host brought out an old book of prayers, and the household disposed themselves for evening prayer. This surprised me, as I had not yet seen any indication of home religion among this people, except the burning of lights before pictures or graven images. A vesper hymn was sweetly sung by the young people, and several prayers were read by the old gentleman, with a litany of some tiresome repetitions.

Hearing that a son of the house was ill, I went and sat with him in the morning for a quarter of an hour, and told him what I knew would set him

thinking, and help him towards recovery or resignation, without, I hope, doing violence to the creed of his fathers. We left with mutual a Dios, and with the promise of a hearty welcome on our return.

At nine o'clock, we descended a valley, crossed the Pun Ceres river, and, mounting the other side of the valley, found ourselves in a large savanna. Four Indians were carrying parts of an ox into their village, which was visible ; but, as it lay out of our way, we did not enter it. The Indians had bought the ox for nine pesos, or thirty shillings, which seemed a high price in a place where cattle abounded. Similarly in Habana de Cuba, I heard a gentleman say that he had just come in from an unsuccessful search for good Havanah cigars, nothing less than a large order being negotiable.

“Ahi esta Pun Ceres!” exclaimed my companion, as we turned out of a large cluster of trees. There indeed were the mountains of Pun Ceres. A deep, wide, rocky vale stretched out before us, through which we had to go. But it would have been a sin not to have stopped awhile to adore

the Creator through his marvellously grand and beautiful work. The valley was not like many we have seen in the mountains of Jamaica, which, rising gradually from their base, and declining towards the open valley, are variegated by the sun's light with every conceivable colour into natural mosaic. These seem to have been cleft, as if they rose almost perpendicularly, or with the very least declination, from the bowels of the earth ; and there was no colour about them, except the chiaro-oscuro of white, with black shading, as if of pure marble. They were chiefly of limestone.

We descended to a valley of broken rocks very difficult and painful to get over, for we had no shoes on ; and we at last found a beaten track, not very direct, but smooth and pleasant to walk on. After an hour's travelling here, we came to a stream, as clear as crystal, issuing from a natural basin of limestone of about 40 feet circumference.

All about here, the best ginger grows abundantly, and is common property. How did it get there ? I asked of some of the people, but they

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could not tell. Ginger, they said, always grew there. They remembered, as children, picking ginger there with their parents. I expect that it was an old ginger field, and, left undisturbed for years, it had increased itself according to the manner of such roots.

Ginger is now a part of the Pun Ceres trade. It is largely cultivated in every cornuca. Cassavae bread is also a staple of Pun Ceres, and, of course, cassavae starch ; six or seven donkeys at a time, each with four cuentas of bread, or two of starch, may be seen daily wending their way up the hill to the savanna on their route to Maturin. And in the corn (maize) season there is a continuous procession of donkeys daily traversing the road. The crops of maize (corn) would astonish the farmers of Demerara. Cotton is also largely cultivated, and forms a part of the trade. But the principal article of culture and manufacture is tobacco, of a very good quality, which, like the cotton, is made up in bales, and well covered with casipo, or wild plantain leaves. The Pun Cerean women also contribute to the in-

dustry of the district, by spinning balls of cotton thread, making hammocks, and weaving cotton cloth.

If we keep in mind that, with the exception of a very small minority of the mixed breeds, the producers of this district are pure Chaima Indians, and compare their industrial status with other South American Indians, we cannot but conclude that Indian civilisation in Venezuela surpasses that of the Indians of the contiguous countries.*

* It is apparent, from Venezuelan statistics, that their Indians have been instructed and utilised as members of the Republic.

In the year 1800, they are classified among the inhabitants thus :—

(In round numbers, from Hippisley's Expedition).

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Whites, | 200,000 |
| 2. Mixed races, including civilised Indians, | 406,000 |
| 3. Slaves, | 62,000 |
| 4. Indians under Christian influence, | 37,000 |
| 5. Independent Indians, | 83,000 |

And in the year 1839 :—

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. Whites, | 260,000 |
| 2. Mixed races, | 414,000 |
| 3. Slaves, | 50,000 |
| 4. Civilised Indians, | 155,000 |
| 5. Catechised Indians, | 14,000 |
| 6. Independent Indians, | 53,000 |

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Indians from within the boundaries of Brazil are steadily entering British Guiana as settlers, owing doubtless to the latitude given to them to cut wood, and also to the enjoyment they possess of equal rights with British settlers. But beyond these privileges they are left pretty much to themselves for the cultivation of steady habits of industry, and the morality which industry brings along with it. Portions of a community require leading-strings of a strong kind: to these the *laissez faire* policy is unjust as it is unwise. But for this policy, the negro race in British Guiana would be, I think, occupying a better position than they now do, and the Indians would cease their desultory habits of labour, and become steady producers and consumers in the commonwealth.

We presented ourselves to the *jefe politico* or magistrate of the town. He was a tall Indian of about fifty years of age, in apparently not the best health, and with an intelligent but rather sinister countenance.

There were five or six soldiers in the apartment. One of them was cooking, one or two

were furbishing their old muskets, and the others were lounging about the door, fully accoutred, that is, bootless, jacketless, one with a cap, the other with an old and torn straw hat. They could be distinguished as soldiers only by their crossbelts with the bayonets and cartouche boxes.

The revenue officer, who appeared to have some communication for the jefe, retired with him into an apartment, and after a while the jefe came out and asked what he could do for me. To my inquiries respecting the peons, he answered that Christobal had left a week ago, with three other men, to work with un Ingles at Caña Caruto, presumably myself, and that Domingo was ill, and had deputed one of the three men to work in his stead. I asked permission to visit the town, and to see Domingo, if possible. Domingo, he said, was at home, some distance off. He would have himself gladly taken me about the town, only that he had some business to look after, but I was at liberty to go and see whatever was worth seeing. My companion offered to go with me.

The town of Pun Ceres is built in regular squares, in number about twenty, with an open space four times the size of the ordinary blocks. This open space is called La Plaza, and is supposed to be the place for the evolutions of the citizen soldiers of the district, and also the public market. On one side of this square was the guard-room or court-house, in which I saw the jefé. There were two or three stores or shops on the opposite side, kept by half-breeds. One side contained the district church. All the houses are whitewashed outside, and have thatched roofs.

We entered the church. It was of stucco, and thatched, and very decent within. The chancel had some pretensions to the gaudy splendour which mars the beauty of many churches, and is especially distasteful when its poverty of execution makes it a travesty of the original design.

The cura, a young man of about thirty years, was a priest of pure Indian blood, of a very benevolent thoughtful countenance, and with the slightest tinge of priestly pride discernible. He

was overlooking some painters and gilders, who had painted the rounded ceiling of the chancel of a very deep sky blue, and placed golden stars, and a carver who was replacing or renewing a dislocated member of an image of the Blessed Virgin Mother.

I never saw more goats at once in any place than in this square. They were lying all under the eaves of the church, and on the steps, quite tame, and undisturbed by the presence of passers by. We went to Domingo's house, in the suburbs of the town, where he was lying in his chincora with fever. I was glad to see him in his own place and among his family, to all of whom he introduced me.

CHAPTER X.

MY CORNUCA.

We walked back to Maturin, and after a day's rest I started overland for Caña Colorado. As there is a considerable length of savanna before one gets to the forest land, it was advisable to leave Maturin in the afternoon and sleep in one of the settlements; then, starting early in the morning, to enter the forest before the sun rose high. I stopped at a settlement containing three or four peons with the proprietor, his wife and children, all Indians. They were cutting a cornuca in the forest, and lived out on the savanna. Here I slung my chinchora, but what from the mosquitoes, and the smoke made to drive them away, there was no rest during the night. The peons, who had got aloft to a half-floor by the roof, were evidently in like trouble, to judge by the flappings of their hands against their bodies

nearly all the night, and their repeated exclamations of "Caramba!" always, with them, an expression of surprise or annoyance. Long before daybreak I started away, and was joined by a seaman who was returning to the caña with despatches from his consignee. On comparing notes, I found that he also had been driven out by the mosquitoes from a neighbouring rancheria. The morning was fresh in the savanna; and after a good walk, deeming that it was yet too early to descend into the forest, we sat down and I stretched myself out and slept very comfortably till sunrise. We passed by a hato that morning and had some milk, and took a small cheese (*queso mano*). The sailor, who was the regular messenger from the cattle schooner to Maturin, was several times impatient at our slow progress; and when he heard that I intended to sleep at the Arenal, we parted company, as it was of importance that he should be on board his vessel that evening.

The Arenal, at which I stopped about three o'clock that same afternoon, was a large sand-

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reef, on which was a cornuca, owned by a mixed family. The sand was of the lightest yellow, and hard set, very pleasant to walk on, and dry immediately after a shower which fell that afternoon. The farmers told me that the rest of the road was too moist, with recent rains and the treading of cattle, to be convenient for early travelling ; and as I was certain of getting to La Ceiba long before night-fall, I did not leave the Arenal before ten in the morning.

The journey was a most unpleasant one. Llaneros, with their mud-boots, passed me frequently that day, almost skipping through the mud. This was owing to equipment and habit. I blamed my ignorance, for I now saw and felt that no bushman should be without a pair ; ordinary boots would be only an encumbrance. The mud-holes were sometimes knee-deep, and it was often very difficult to get the foot out to make another step forward. Of course I had, as I saw the others all do, to take off my trousers and throw them over my shoulders. Then the cow-flies were a nuisance. They took occasion to attack

the calves of the legs very cleverly at the most helpless times, so that my legs soon streamed with blood. The sticks and stumps under the mud cut up my feet severely. At last came the culmination. Brambles and thorns appear to have been laid down on certain parts of the road to be trampled by the feet of horses and oxen, and these laid me *hors de resistance*. I fairly gave over, and, struggling to one side of the road, laid me down with no definite purpose whatever. At that moment, it was hard to decide whether it would be better to rise up and walk on to La Ceiba, or be pounced upon by a tiger. The latter, certainly, seemed the quicker solution of the difficulty. But I heard the sound of paddles, and hailed out lustily. A conversation ensued, by which I found that they were friends going to La Ceiba, the one in command being Juan, a god-son of Señor Valliviu. He came up and helped me to the corial. I washed my feet and legs, put on my trousers, and made a vow never again, if I could help it, to travel a foot in the lowland cattle paths of Venezuela.

As an instance of the reticence of Indians, and of their *insouciance* respecting matters not affecting themselves or their families, I shall mention that Hills was at La Ceiba the day before, and that Gerilleau, passing by in a corial, had a quarrel with him, the result of which was that Hills, having his rifle with him, shot the unfortunate Gerilleau. Two Indians, who were with him in the corial, jumped out and swam away to the other bank, not knowing the motive or object of the assassin. Although I travelled with three Indians who had all witnessed the act, and one of them, Juan, was particularly intimate with me, yet I heard nothing of the melancholy event until I was told of it by Señor Valliviu, while his good wife was engaged taking the prickles from my feet.

According to Señor Valliviu, the two partners had mistrusted each other, while each took every opportunity to recoup himself of some part of his supposed loss. "They were," he said, "disreputable men, to whom he had shown kindness, and, from both, received ingratitude in the most painful and offensive manner. I have had thoughts

of punishing these men," continued he, "and could have done it signally. But see the justice of God, in making themselves the executioners of their own punishment, and His goodness in saving me from a revenge that would have embittered my whole life."

At Caña Caruto, I found Christobal established as my overseer, and working with great industry with the three peons, cutting down the trees, lopping the branches, and arranging them for burning. "He knew," he said, "that he could safely begin to work, for my absence was not, he thought, likely to be protracted."

When the field was burned, and the ground prepared for planting, several buckets of corn were soaked in water over night, with due regard to the time of the moon;* for it is considered a point of great importance that the germination of cereals shall commence before, or at the time of the full moon.

* "The Botocudos of Brazil held the moon in great veneration, and attributed to her influence the chief phenomena in nature."—Quoted in Bradford's *American Antiquities*.

In the morning we made two companies, and commenced from the extreme ends of one side of the field. Following a straight line made with a long cord, the first man made a hole in the ground with a pole at every pace ; one following closely at his heels dropped in three grains of corn ; another immediately after him covered the holes. When only two are engaged, the one who drops the corn covers the hole by pushing earth with his toes.

We had to examine the field every day for two weeks, on account of the rats which, every night dug up some corn. Wherever we saw corn failing to grow we renewed the sowing.

We prepared likewise a nursery of tobacco ; and when the plants were sufficiently high, they were transplanted in quincunx order. If the rats did not trouble these, the worms did, and were so voracious that three days neglect of a plant would cause its total destruction. A tame powis and some young fowls were very serviceable in assisting to destroy the worms. When

the leaves became tinged with yellow, we plucked them, tied them together, and hung them on lines under the eaves of the house to dry. At night they were exposed to the dew. In due time they were packed and covered, and allowed to sweat ; in which process they got the filmy appearance on the surface of the leaves and the narcotine intensified. The tobacco manufactured was good enough for our use ; but even Christobal, who was loth to dispraise it, said it ought to have turned out better.

At last we had the satisfaction of seeing a beautiful field of corn growing, where a few months ago was a part of the wild forest. When the corn became ripe we topped the stalks and bent down the ears to keep them from the rain, and to disconnect them as far as we could from the juicy moisture of the corn-stalk, while with very little trouble they obtained the full benefit of the sun's heat.

A good paying price was realised in Trinidad for the corn. The surplus of our produce, com-

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prising corn-meal, pumpkins and pease, was sold in the Caña village, and defrayed the balance of expenses of the labour, which was not heavy, as the men had received advances.

CHAPTER XI.

TO MATURIN.

I MUST confess that the cornuca was very dull after the departure of the Indians. True I had my small family with me; but so far from their presence being an alleviation, I felt that I was happier when I alone felt the privations of this new life, and could solace myself that they at least were enjoying comforts. Then the calamity that had overtaken my neighbours, and the consequent cessation of their wood-cutting establishment added to the melancholy and desolate aspect of the caña, which, varied occasionally only by the descent of the drunken and lawless mongrel breed of Indian and Spanish, who lived at the head of the caña, and whose visits seem to have been made only to beg with an impudence that would not be denied, and who considered no part of the dwelling sacred to privacy, made us desirous to leave

for a time, and to seek a more populous and agreeable scene.

We packed off therefore for Maturin—my wife and little daughter Ninine, myself, and our little African god-son Johnnie, a waif that had attached himself to me,—a street-gamin who had been accustomed to sleep under upturned boats, or under wharves, or in an empty barrel. Johnnie was about twelve years old at this time; was what is called dry-boned, and in the Dutch creole patois “*passuma*,”—meaning *stunted in growth, precocious in ripeness*. He had a nervous contraction on one side of his face, occasioned, it was generally supposed, by his sleeping in the moonlight. It was apparent when he smiled that his mouth was hauled awry.*

* The Roman poet speaks of “*the moon's doubtful and malignant light*,” “*incertam Lunam sub luce maligna*.”

Throughout the East the opinion is common, that the moon-beams are deleterious, injuring the sight, and defacing the countenances of persons who sleep exposed to them. The light of the moon Plutarch supposed in his day to be an active agent in putrifying animal substances; and the fishermen of Sicily now cover the fish at night exposed on the sea-shore to dry, alleging that the moonbeams would otherwise putrify them. It is supposed, also, that tender plants are often cut off in April and May, by the moon-

But what a laugh ! Johnnie's laugh, when heard, was always as the entrance of a ray of light into a dark corner. Never mind what train of

light. The facts observed in these cases are no doubt true, but referable to another cause than the one stated. Animal substances putrify, plants are cut off, and sight is injured, by open-air exposure on a moonlight night, yet not because of that light, but of the removal of the clouds, the fine clear sky, which favours the radiation of heat, by which exposed bodies become colder than the surrounding air, and hence the mischiefs narrated. We cannot attribute to the moonlight any potential effect upon terrestrial substances, when it has been ascertained that chloride of silver, the colour of which suffers the greatest and most rapid change by an exposure to light, is not at all affected by the lunar beams condensed in the focus of a powerful burning glass. Besides these supposed instances of lunar action, cases of disease, such as epilepsy and insanity, were believed to be largely influenced by the moon by the two great physicians of antiquity—Hippocrates and Galen ; and many of the moderns have countenanced the same opinion. Hence the word *lunacy* is applied to mental distempers. There would be a reasonable basis for the idea in question, if it could be proved that the moon has any deranging effect upon the constituents of the atmosphere. But this remains to be shewn ; and to suppose disorders of the brain to be exasperated by lunar changes, as an effect of those changes, may be safely dismissed as a vulgar conceit. Even were it incontestably established that such effects occur at such intervals, a simple coincidence would be proved, and the question of connection left untouched. There is some reason to suppose that exasperations of insanity are coincident with the full moon, owing to the more distinct lights and shadows of the night powerfully affecting the imagination.—Milner's "*Gallery of Nature.*"

thought I was pursuing, my countenance was always immediately radiated with a smile, or at least a streak of comfort would run through my mind. I have often since missed that laugh ; and, in its place, have imagined its presence, or tried to remember it as present, and even thus I have been happy. I think people of low spirits, hypochondriacs, and those meditating suicide, should, in addition to taking medicines, be attended by a joyous laughing spirit such as Johnnie, to minister to their troubled minds.

When we got to the village of Caña Colorado, in which the guards resided, I was surprised to find the "Cabo regarde," the chief of the revenue guards, so attentive to me. The old gentleman, to whom I had never previously spoken a word beyond the usual salutation, was very courteous ; he shook hands, enquired of the health of myself and family, and told me what I suppose must have been to him interesting, anecdotes of his children. I believe the captain of the revenue guards thought I had a duty to perform to the state, or to the state's officers, and he was encour-

aging me to do it. But when I left him and stepped into the alijo, which immediately started, an officer was sent after me, who proved to be my quondam companion to Pun Ceres, to search for contraband. But after what seemed a merely formal search, my old friend bade me "a Dios," and retired.

It was the dry season, and the season for the eggs of the terraquo or flat turtles; and so at several of the sandbanks the lightermen dug out eggs. Those who are fond of them speak of them in high terms.

The goods on the alijos are evenly-packed and well-covered with tarpaulin; the captain sits astern with a long steering paddle tied on to the craft; two, and sometimes four men with long poles pushed against the sandy bed of the river, run along on the sides of the alijo. These pole-men will run backwards and forwards in this manner all day long, only stopping for a moment, at times, to drink water, or their favourite beverage of mixed cassavae bread and water.

Three alijos travelled together, each with three

or four passengers: our voyage was therefore very pleasant. On the sandbanks, where we stopped to cook, the party would group themselves into several companies, and amuse themselves by essays of verbal jokes and witty replies, extravagant compliments and returns; sarcastic and serio-comic songs, improvised and sung to the accompaniment of bandolas.

The Venezuelans, whether in their own homes or abroad, never eat without inviting the bystanders. "Almuerzo á la disposicion de ustedes, señores." "Breakfast at your disposal," when breakfast was cooked, was heard on all sides; and any one could eat freely with one group or with another. Of course such courtesies are regulated by some rule of custom that prevents them from being the cause of awkward *contre temps*. I should not like, dressed as I was then, to invite a mixed company of boatmen and passengers in British Guiana to dispose of my breakfast on a sandbank. The invitation, I am afraid, would be accepted somewhat too familiarly, and altogether too literally.

CHAPTER XII.

MATURIN.

THE alijos landed at the embarcadero, which is the property of old Mrs Valliviun, a black lady much respected by the townspeople. Like her son, she is very tall and not corpulent, but of good proportions. She received us very kindly, and sent out an Indian woman to inquire where we might procure lodgings, until we had provided ourselves with a house. We obtained quarters with a family, the head of which was a discharged guarda, of pure Spanish descent, and named José Basilio.

Our stay in that house was not longer than two weeks' duration ; for, besides our wishing to be more settled, our host seemed to have misunderstood the terms of our contract. His cats and dogs, and the cats and dogs of his neighbours, if I could believe him, were responsible for the

nightly plunder of our provisions. The only retaliation from our side of the house was in the following manner:—I had admired and bought a young Venezuelan fox, a beautiful creature with soft, full, grey hair, a perfect tail, and with bright eyes and a saucy-looking face. It was fierce for its size, and seemed, especially when chickens were in view, quite intractable. Now José Basilio prided himself on his breed of game fowls; and I often had trouble to drive them off when my pet was at his meals. One day I was not perhaps sufficiently alert, young master reynard appearing to be in a doze, when he cleverly snatched up a young cock. Before I could decide on depriving him of his prey, he commenced to pluck the little cock so masterly, that admiration for the manner mastered my disapprobation of the act, and I thereby made myself aider and abetter in reynard's wrong-doing.

The house we took was in a principal street, that is one leading from La Plaza or parade ground to one of the country roads. It was

covered with *tejas* or tiles made in a neighbouring *tejaria* which was the property of an Italian physician. The floor was of square flat tiles. The house was in front of a large yard which contained fruit-trees and offices, and was enclosed by a stuccoed wall.

Maturin, like most Spanish towns, is regularly laid out in squares. Most of the houses were covered with home-made tiles ; the others were thatched. The church was a disgrace to the town. It was a large barn-like building, covered with thatch. Its one bell hung from a skeleton frame ; the boys ascended by a common ladder, and their strokes were not an unpleasant substitute for the changes of a peal of bells. It was in contemplation to erect a new church more worthy of the purpose of the building.

The population of the city proper was about 10,000, and with its environs about 20,000. These consisted of natives of pure Spanish descent, Chaima Indians, a small proportion of Negroes, Europeans (especially Scotch), Italian, and French, with the consequent mixed population which

formed the great majority. Not one European Spaniard did I observe in the place.

The inhabitants on the northern side of the city get water from the river in the dry season ; but during the heavy rainy weather, when the water is muddy, the whole town is supplied from a brook on the southern side. This watering-place is called the Aguada or Agua'a. It is a little tedious to descend the hill and to climb up. From four o'clock in the morning till night time, women and children carry water in taparas or large gourds or goubies and calabashes scooped out and dried, and with a stopper of cornhusk. These taparas are usually bound with cord to protect them from breaking, and as a means of suspension. Often a woman might be seen with a tapara in each hand and one on her head. They contain generally from one to two gallons each. Sometimes a lad comes along with his donkey with its two paniers laden with taparas de agua ; he is a water seller and his price is five farthings the gallon. Water is not therefore wasted ; not that it is scarce, but it is not easily procured. Sometimes the poor are

put to straits from being unable to buy and scarcely affording the time to descend the Aguada.

La Plaza de Exercitacion is a large square similarly situated as is that of Pun Ceres, but with buildings of a larger if not all of them of a better kind. Here is the church and the quartel for soldiers and prisoners. The square is used principally for pedestrian strollers at evening and on moonlight nights ; for military manœuvres ; and for bull-fights. The other square is the market called La Plaza del Mercado. Here good beef is sold at five cents the pound, good weight, reminding one of the "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." In slaughtering pigs the whole skin with the fat is taken off, the inner part is sliced into small diamond shapes, and rock salt of the country broken and rubbed in ; it is then hung up and exposed to the air. This is tocino or bacon. Sometimes the tocino and other fatty parts are melted down, the lard placed in bottles, and the residue of the skin and other integuments is sold for food.

There are shops for vitualla or victuals, or provisions, in which the vegetable productions of the cornucas are sold.

I have said that a pound of beef was sold for five cents ; but it would be more correct to say that less than five cents of beef is not sold in the market. For five cents, however, such is the liberality of the butchers, the beef given approaches nearer to three pounds than one pound. With this quantity of beef the purchaser goes into a shop in which vitualla are sold, and for a quartillo, or two and a half cents, he gets sweet cassavae, potatoes, tannias, a slice of pumpkin, three plantains, three peppers, five or six small tomatoes, and some thyme and scallions.

Then there are shops for the sale of foreign provisions and spirits, and shops for cloth and clothing. There are two regular medical men, and one apothecary's shop. There is also a vegetable medicine garden, to which one goes to buy medio real or so many reales of bush remedies for any conceivable malady.

Dip-candles of a very good quality are made

from the fat of oxen. The trade is monopolised by women, who make and sell them to the shops and private families. Soap also, very soft and black, but said to wash cleanly, is also a trade by women.

Corn is largely exported. It comes from the contiguous cornucas, and from places even a good one or two days' distance. That for home consumption is prepared in a variety of ways. For bread (arepa) or paste for pies or patés, the corn is preferred not quite dry; it is pounded in a mortar to remove the horny cuticle of the grain, sprinkled water being added to assist the separation; then it is immersed in cold water and well shaken, and the pure corn taken out. The remnant with the water is for the pigs. The corn is then parboiled and allowed to remain in the water all night. The water is esteemed for its nutritive quality. In the morning the softened corn is ground between stones, and put up in flat, round cakes, to be baked on a flat circular baking-iron. The pith of the corn-bread is either of a beautiful white, or rich yellow, according to the colour of the corn.

There is a very pretty pearl-coloured corn called maiz cariaco, of smaller cob and grain than the ordinary maize, and not to be confounded with the Guinea corn. It is nearly all starch. Dried, pounded, and sifted, it is made into a variety of cakes which melt deliciously in the mouth. Blancmange and other preparations for invalids are made from the flour.

Tobacco is brought chiefly from Pun Ceres and Aragua. The latter place produces as fine a quality as best Havannah. The Pun Ceres tobacco is packed in bales covered with casipo or wild plantain leaves. The best Aragua is twisted like rope, and put up in small cylindrical parcels called rollos; the one is sold by weight, the other is measured out by the yard.

Sugar is chiefly what is called clay-sugar, and made up in cones of from 2 to 4 lbs. These are called papelones. A bit of papelone, with a bit of cheese, followed up by a bit of cassavae bread, is travelling food when cooking is not convenient.

The cotton brought into Maturin is opened, aired, and further cleansed; then packed and

pressed in an ordinary screw-press all of wood, and home-made; and then sewn up in bales for exportation.

Cassavae bread not only is the staff of life to all in the state of Nueva Andalucia, of which the city and district of Maturin form a part, but it is also largely exported to Trinidad. So is starch, both of cassavae and Indian arrowroot, exported in large quantities; and also bags of peas and of ginger. Tasajo, the salted dried beef, is in every house, and forms a part of the necessary stock for travellers. This is also exported to Trinidad. It is pleasant and highly nutritious.

Salt comes from Cumana to Maturin, and is protected by a duty so high that it amounts to the prohibition of foreign salt. But it is of the coarsest and dirtiest. It is measured out in cups, and retailed in ordinary times at $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents the cup; but the price, owing to the unsteadiness of supplies, is very fluctuating. During the war it rose to 10 cents, and in the last weeks it could with difficulty be procured for love, but not for money.

Wheat flour, when sold in Trinidad for \$9 and \$10 the barrel, obtains in Maturin the price of \$19 and \$20. Wheaten bread is consequently very dear here. It is purchased only by the more affluent foreigners as necessary food, by all others it is used as cakes are, as a luxury.

The customary price of a milch cow with her calf is 8 pesos or \$6:40. Turkeys, large and fat, are 50 cents each. A turkey-cock, whose fluttering calls forth the opposed strength of a man, is sold for a peso of 80 cents; the highest price for a fowl is a shilling; young game cocks are sold at a peso; pigs vary, according to size, from one to six pesos. The breed of dogs is large; they are fed on the offals of the carniceria or slaughter-house, which the butchers gladly dispense gratuitously. But offals in Maturin include the heart, liver, and lights of cattle.

One might well imagine that a horn of the goat that suckled Jupiter, the famed Amalthean Cornucopia, had found its temple in the heart of this city, whence flow so abundantly earth's choicest gifts.

CHAPTER XIII.

INFLUENCES.

ALFONSO was a lad of about eighteen years. A part of his grandmother's house was occupied as a shop for the sale of drugs, the property of an Italian physician, who also owned the tejeria or tile-factory. The lad was employed in the dispensing of medicines and the selling of drugs. His father, who bore the character of being vacillating and erratic in his disposition, had left the town for many years, and contributed nothing to the support of his family.

Alfonso was intelligent and inquiring. I was drawn towards him by his tractable disposition, and the proper and thoughtful remarks he often made during our conversations. His mind was cast in a religious mould, and I was glad to teach him, as far as I was able, to have a just conception of God's revealed will. His acquaintance

with Materia Medica assisted us in the inquiries after Him who made nature ; his knowledge of physical diseases led us to the study of moral depravity, and to the contemplation of Him whose blood alone can cleanse the soul from defilement.

“ In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God.”—MILTON.

But I studiously abstained from saying anything to make him dissatisfied with his own creed. And when he spoke to me of my own heresy, as he considered it, I explained to him the true nature of heresy, and cleared myself of the charge without needless and uncharitable reflections. In accounting for the diversity of Christian sects, I said that no man could get to Maturin without travelling ; but there were more ways than one, depending in a great measure upon the point of starting ; that it was also optional to travel to the city by way of the river or on land, care being taken to pursue the right tract or course. So may we not assume it to be quite possible safely to journey towards heaven, albeit at the risk of greater difficulties and dangers by the way, either

by the elaborated but hearty sincere worship of the Catholics, or the simple spiritual one of the Puritans, or the rationalising aspirations towards perfection of the Christian Philosophers? The aim and intent of every medico was to restore health, but the systems adopted need not necessarily be exactly the same. Provided with all necessary appliances, and with equally skilful navigators, and bound for the same place, no two ships can pursue the same course with mathematical precision, though they may certainly arrive at the same appointed port.

This wonderful dissimilarity, beautiful in its very variety, without ascribing to God the authorship of confusion, is attributable to Himself, who has given a distinct individuality to each mind and person, and permits them, through their own idiosyncrasies, to see the beauty and aspire after the practice of a holy life.

About this time I received a communication from a Protestant missionary in Trinidad, offering to send me tracts for distribution, printed in Spanish, in refutation of Romanism.

"He that dies a martyr," says Colton, "proves that he was not a knave, but by no means that he was not a fool." And as I did not desire to deprive the missionary of the honour of martyrdom, I declined to receive his tracts for circulation. I was not interested in reclaiming Spaniards from their Catholicism, such as it was, but in making them understand the dignity of their manhood. To make a worse Protestant of a bad Romanist is no part of my ambition.

There was a man came to Demerara, in British Guiana, who accepted from his admirers the rather blasphemous soubriquet of "the Angel Gabriel." He traversed the city of Georgetown with a trumpet in his hand, which he blew to gather the mob. The burthen of his harangue, always religio-political, was intended to set one part of the community against the other ; race against race ; and Christian faith and practice against Christian faith and practice. No doubt the man sincerely believed that he was doing God's work ; and his zeal, which had fed on the oppositions, and incarcerations, and ill-treatment he had undergone in other

countries, may be attributed to the purest and holiest motives. And when, at last, his preaching caused a simultaneous uprising, rioting, and shop-breaking throughout the country, for which he was tried and imprisoned, he doubtless regarded himself as a soldier of "the noble army of martyrs."

Alfonso was becoming everything that I could desire. I must confess that I loved the lad; and the afternoon that did not bring him to me seemed to have passed unsatisfactorily. He was ill once for a week, and I went to see him once only, for I was not acquainted with his mother and his grandmother. On the following week, he attended his business, but did not come over to see me as at other times, and the earlier part of the third week I spent in the vicinity of the Laguna Grande. I lost no time, on my return to the city, to go into the drug-shop, and look after my little friend. After the usual salutations, I observed to him that we had become strangers to each other, and that I was at a loss to account for it.

"O" said Alfonso, rather flippantly, "I am

tired of sermons from those who are outside the pale of the Church."

"And are the sermons such that those within the pale can disapprove?" I said in reply.

"Perhaps not," he answered, "for certain persons in the Church are as fond of that sort of thing as you seem to be. But I am tired of it, for it is unmanly, and tends to enfeeble the mind of a man."

"Have you found a better teacher, then?"

"No," replied the lad, "not a better teacher; for I must say that I have learnt much from you, and in a manner so pleasant, that I shall never forget the gist of the lessons; and I am not ungrateful, but you make a sermon of the commonest thing, as if you can see nothing without seeing God at the same time, and I have been laughed out of that way."

"Which way, Alfonso? Surely you have not allowed yourself to be laughed out of the way of Life?"

"No! But Señor Lamberto says that the way of Life is that which we enjoy in life; the life that

God gave us, with the appetites with which we came into the world."

"I wonder, Alfonso, that you did not take the right side, and show Señor Lamberto his fatal error. You must have known that he was in a delusion, or that he was tampering with your judgment, and with your life, as God would have your life to be. Are you so soon, and with so little provocation and temptation, ready to give up the pattern set us by our Saviour, the Son of God, the blessed son of the Virgin?"

"I shall never do that," he said, "but we cannot always be good, you know; it is only natural for us to have enjoyments."

"The enjoyment of that picaro (rogue) Anselmo, who is now passing, could never be enjoyment for a Christian gentleman of refinement like your doctor. Nor can anyone believe that the wretched drunken thief there, not feeling that he lacks anything to make him perfect, and only a few bottles of rum to make him happy, can be the perfect type of what God intended him to be. The enjoyments that Señor

Lamberto speaks of, you cannot but despise, when you compare them with the character of our Exemplar. The law of enjoyments and the law of goodness come from the same source, and are inextricably conjoined ; when we break the one, we break the other. A good man's enjoyments do not hurt his goodness ; his goodness regulates but does not lessen his enjoyments. I am not, I hope, out of the pale of the Church; but as such is your belief, it is reasonable that you should, sometimes, be suspicious of my opinions. In any doubt, I advise you to go to the doctor, in whose honour, at least, we may confide. But, Alfonso, beware of evil counsellors, and evil companions, and evil habits. I remember that an English poet (Cowper) has said :—

“Habits are soon assumed ; but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.”

And an older poet said :—

“(The gates of Sin) are open night and day,
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way ;
But to return to heaven's pure light again,
This is a work of labour and of pain.”*

* — facilis descensus Averni :
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est. Æneidos, Lib. IV. 126.

"I shall come as before," said the lad, "to see you. I knew that Señor Lamberto was not quite right: I could not make it out. And I felt that to live as I know Lamberto lives, and as he believes one ought to live, Our Lord must be shut out."

Lamberto was a man who had left Maturin some years before in disgrace, and had just then returned with his vices hardened, and nothing, not even the agreeable manners of a gentleman, but only the prestige of a good family connexion to recommend him. He was trying (and I am sorry to say he succeeded) to seduce Alfonso's mother, while his conversations were tending to corrupt the youth's mind. But his stay in Maturin was not of long duration; for he was placed in carcel and banished from the town, according to a good Maturin law, for the abduction of a girl from her parent's house :

"The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless Reputation; that away,
Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay."

SHAKESPEARE.

Alfonso's mind was too pure not to resent the

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gross wickedness of the man; and we became more than ever attached to each other. He stood God-Father for my little son, and promised, if I died, to teach my boy in the way I taught him.

He went to study in a seminary at Ciudad Bolivar, for the Roman Catholic priesthood, and when I last heard of him, he was a hard-working, zealous priest. *Laus Deo.*

CHAPTER XIV.

REBELLION.

THERE is not, I think, a more mischievous government than that of a republic. Utopia, perhaps, might safely be republican. Greece was never more at peace with herself than when she merged into the Macedonian Empire. For ignorance and vice, a despotic monarchy and a strong loyal army are best suited ; for a millennial state, a republic may be harmless ; but a constitutional monarchy with more or less stringency is best adapted to a people of mixed morals.

Republicanism, other than merely provisional, is especially unfortunate for a country that has fought for, and obtained its independence ; for heroic patriotism can truly exist only while its liberties are at issue : but a republic presupposes a free country.

The curse of Venezuela is her form of govern-

ment. The approach of every quadrennial election of a president is the signal for political intrigues, ending invariably in bloodshed, and often in organised rebellion and civil war. And "civil wars," says Burke, "strike deepest of all into the manners of the people. They vitiate their politics; they corrupt their morals; they pervert even the natural taste and relish of Equity and Justice."

It appears, according to article 70 of the Constitution, that "the president cannot be elected for the period immediately following his term of office." But for a series of years the law was virtually disregarded. A president who determined to rule as long as he could, had two brothers whom, by the influence of his position, he successively placed in the presidential chair to keep it warm for him, he meanwhile manipulating the strings of government.

The time had now arrived for one of these elections. A powerful opposition had arisen to counteract this breach of the spirit of the law, and to frustrate the re-election of the triumvirate brothers.

But the star of the brothers, Monagas, was in the ascendant: they triumphed.

The two great parties were now about to try their strength in battle: the government, or Monagas party, the Colorados (red); and the Paez party, the Amarillos (yellow). Each had a specious plea of justice on its side. The government party asserted that the assumption of arms by the Amarillos constituted rebellion; while the Amarillos retorted that a government illegally constituted was but a faction of outlaws. It was evident, however, that although the spirit of the law had been violated by the reds (Colorados), they had kept to the letter. The assumption of arms for civil warfare is so serious an act, that suspicion rises against the faith and motives of those who strike the first blow.

“ War is honourable

In those who do their native rights maintain ;
In those whose swords an iron barrier are
Between the lawless spoiler and the weak ;
But is in those who draw th' offensive blade
For added power or gain, sordid and despicable.”

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Maturin, although rapidly increasing in wealth

and population, is only a second rate town, and its distance from the Federal District, of which Caracas is the capital, is about 250 miles as the crow flies. But Maturin was the very centre of Nueva Andalucia, and well adapted to be the headquarters of an insurgent army in that state.

Strangers began to drop in by dozens and half-dozens, and some of the principal men of the place secretly left. A Provisional Government was declared, the head of which for the State of New Andalucia was established at Cumaná. Trincheras or wide deep trenches were dug and barricades set up at the entrances to the town ; and at the two principal entrances from the country, Punta Plata, and Punta Mosquito, they had cannon. There was one favourite cannon called "Bulli Negro," the frequent subject of their songs. The people of Maturin seemed to believe that as long as "Bulli Negro" remained in their possession, the city was impregnable and themselves quite safe.

On the third week we had quite a little army of officers. There were a general, two or three

colonels, and several captains and subs, and a regiment or two of citizen soldiers. The Indians, who did not seem very fond of fighting, and probably were indifferent in their choice of sides and appreciation of the characters of their rulers, were forced to take arms; indeed they comprised the majority of the insurgent body.

While part of an Indian family was forced into the rebellious camp, the remaining members were hunted from their hiding places and made to fight against their own relations, without the impulsion of patriotism, *esprit de corps*, ambition, hatred, or revenge. They reminded one of the Persian slaves that had to be whipped to action, and watched lest they ran away.

Every morning the town was aroused by the sound of the *reveille*; the soldiers were marched to La Plaza de Exercitacion to parade, their only uniformity being in their cross belts and muskets. Lilliput and Brobdingnag, shoes and no shoes, Glengarry caps and straw hats, all marched in the same company. They were well officered, if we could judge by the gilt lace defiant air.

One advantage of a republican army is, that if a man is not looking out for the first opportunity to run away, he is in himself an army complete, prepared to "shake the rotten carcase of Old Death out of his rags," the only drawback being that such an one is impatient of discipline.

There was a great deal of unusual stir in the little town. Money was plentiful. The officers and soldiers had to eat and they had no work to do; so they spent money freely. At night time the usually quiet town was brilliant with balls where revolutionary tunes were played and the words supplied with a force that showed these were Liberty Halls.

Then came the report that General Sotillo was approaching with his "Bravos of the Apure;" men so inured to the swampy and periodically inundated regions of the Apure, and to struggle with caimans, tigers, and culebras de agua—the pythons of the west, for the rescue and preservation of their cattle, and in defence of their own lives, that they were become a race of leather with steel sinews. But the Llanos of New Andalucia

with its more propitious clime, produced men equally accustomed to the fatigues of the cattle chase, who if less savage than the Apureans, were not less brave.

Who was General Sotillo ? Well, I never heard his friends speak of him. But if you are willing to take his character from the description given by the Maturineros who did not profess ardent friendship for the General—Sotillo had sold his soul to the devil, who had given in exchange for it the heart of a tiger.* He had risen to the rank of general by the force of his ferocity. Sent to arrest some political prisoners, he brought in their heads in a bag attached to his saddle. In his massacres the first blood on his sword was wiped off on his fingers and placed in his mouth, while he exclaimed that “ *La sangre de un enemigo es dulcé,*” the blood of an enemy is sweet. His

* Don Ramon Paez, who certainly had no reason to love Sotillo, states that several prominent persons were brutally murdered, and their bodies horribly mutilated by the ‘ Minotaur of Santa Anna.’ Of this number were the noble brothers Belisarios, whose salted heads were sent, along with those of Dr Peña and Miguel Coucin, by Sotillo to Monagas as the most acceptable present to his ‘Compaes Tadeo.’

vengeance included the lives of innocent women and children.

This then was the man leading thousands of men, including his favourite regiment of Caribé Indians called "Sotillo's bloodhounds," to punish the rebellious Maturineros.

At last in the fifth week came Sotillo, and with him came also flying reports that the women and the spirit-shops were to be given up to the Indians, and the wealth of the place to his other soldiers.

A young priest came in one day led by two guards. He was a herald from the government army requiring that the town be surrendered. That same afternoon there was a first skirmish; the enemy, as I shall call the besiegers, was dispersed. There was great rejoicing that night.

The same priest came back. This time, it was understood, to ask for a free pass to the daughter of the President and her children. The husband of the lady, an Italian gentleman, was at that time in Trinidad on some mercantile speculation. Some people said that he was out of the way to avoid the fighting, not that he was not a brave

man, but as a quiet protest against the principles of the presidential election. It was a good thing for Maturin, however, that there were such unintended hostages within. For there is little doubt, that otherwise, the town would have been devoted to the flames of fiery arrows.

Food had now become scarce. Sometimes a drove of cattle was brought in which served for several days. But at times the towns-people had to do without meat; and the soldiers too. And now that the besiegers had sent foraging parties to the cornucas on the banks of the Guarapiche, and destroyed or taken away all the cassavae roots, we in the town were in great straits. The unexpected arrival of a few loads of cassavae bread, an ox, or a few cargoes of papelone sugar was as much applauded as if a victory had been obtained. Another evil; wood was scarce. We had been advised, and had provided ourselves with a large quantity, which at first we sold, but had to reserve a balance for ourselves. But one day a corporal and two soldiers came to me with a message from headquarters, that everything

necessary to the existence of the towns-people must be shared alike if money be proffered, and that I must sell or give as long as I had. We had ultimately to break up boxes, cases, benches and chairs, and at last the legs of a table to cook with.

There were several skirmishes; the soldiers from both sides fighting from bush to bush.

The guards were very vigilant at night. An instance of their vigilance is thus reported:—

Some one approaching.

Soldier on guard—"Quien es?"

Some one still approaching.

Soldier on guard—"Quien es?"

Object at a standstill—apparently meditating a retreat.

Soldier on guard—"Quien es?"

Object decidedly retreating.

Soldier on guard—"Lo tiro!" Bang! down comes the object.

The guard approaches to arrest his prisoner and discovers—a dying donkey.

One day there was more than the usual amount

of fighting, judging from the sound of musketry and cannon. Seeing a man who was incapacitated in some way or other from fighting, and two boys with him on a large tamarind tree in the next yard; and hearing their excited expressions of wonder, and their sympathetic cheers and regrets, I passed through the paling and ascended the tree, whence I had a good view of that part of the savanna in which the soldiers were engaged. Our party was broken up in detachments and opposed to others similarly arranged and fighting from clumps of trees. Our line was too near the town to be seen from my point of sight; but the enemy's was quite distinctly visible. It was curious at first to see them opposed to each other, seeming like children at play, and the almost ludicrous way they dropped down. But I soon got accustomed to the distance, and then I felt the reality and enormity of the scene; and when a cannon-ball cleared a passage, eliciting cheers from my companions in the tree, I uttered a groan from the depth of my heart, much to their surprise and disgust that I should care for the

enemy. "One lost to them,"—said the man,— "is one gained to us."

The evening of that day, our soldiers entered the town with their usual cheers. They had gained a battle; had always gained, to judge by their reports. But to me, perhaps because I had seen a part of the battle, the cheers sounded like a delusion. Amidst the cheers, I fancied I could hear the wounded and dying, and the future wails of the widows and orphans. Several who went out that day did not return; but these were said to have gone on somewhere with despatches, probably that their friends might be quieted. They had been despatched on their last mission. Of course the strangers who were left on the field were not known, and not much asked after. At night, after burying the dead, some wounded Indians were brought in, wrapped in hammocks (chinchoras); one, as he passed by me, gave a groan of anguish of body or of mind, perhaps of both.

CHAPTER XV.

EARTHQUAKE.

I SAID that Maturin was in the centre of Nueva Andalucia, but that Cumaná was the capital of that state. Cumaná is well situated for maritime commerce on the southern part of the mouth of the beautiful Golfa de Cariaco, but it is too secluded, by its position at the extremity of a point, and it is cut off from the bulk of the state, for facility of communication, by the mountainous character of the country immediately beyond it. The only apparent reason for its being the capital, is its more convenient vicinity to the Federal district of Caracas than any other city of Nueva Andalucia.

Cumaná was, at this time, in the hands of the insurgents, the Provisorios, as they were called, on account of the Provisional Government they pretended to have organised. Several of the chief

officers and subalterns came from Cumaná, picking up and pressing soldiers on their way to Maturin.

Despatches having been sent on to Cumaná reporting the investiture of Maturin by the Government army, and the consequent distress of the town, and asking for reinforcements, the Provisional Governor of the State sent on to say that aid would be sent to them in men and commissariat requirements within a certain time. It was observed that no fighting had occurred for some days (Sotillo had never been, willingly, the assailant during this siege: his policy seemed to have been patiently to sit and starve out the city to a surrender), and that the officers were in excellent spirits; that double guards were placed at the entrenched and barricaded entrances, and the patrols increased; and that mysterious assurances of a speedy end to the siege were everywhere given to the jaded and starved soldiery and towns-people. But it was also currently reported that Sotillo was impatiently awaiting the arrival of Monagas, with an overwhelming force,

and fuming at the tardy surrender of the distressed town. His wish was to gain admittance before the approach of his superior.

The news of the arrival of Monagas into Sotillo's camp was a great relief to the women and strangers of the town. Maturin was his native place ; his great cattle wealth was principally in the environs of the town ; his own family house was here, and in it his most beloved daughter, La Doña Giuseppi, with her children unprotected but by the general love which sprang from her own benevolent and friendly character. And withal, Monagas was known to be not cruel, and was far-seeing and politic. To have destroyed Maturin would have been to deprecate the value of his cattle farms, and to imperil their very existence in the contingency of revengeful reprisals. To intercede for the liberation of Maturin, and to protect it from Sotillo's infuriated Indians, would strengthen his cause in Nueva Andalucia, by fixing to himself the sympathies of wavering partisans of both sides, and rendering his name popular as a generous foe.

Meanwhile, the Provisorios, shut up in the town, instead of receiving the expected relief from Cumaná, heard news that blanched the swarthy faces of the stoutest hearts, and sent deserters, night after night, into the government camp.

Soldiers for the relief of the besieged town of Maturin had undergone inspection on a certain day by the provisional governor of Cumaná. In the review they had proved themselves experts in the deploying exercises so essential to Venezuelan warfare. The despatches were written, so was the order for the drafting of the detachment of relief. They stood in close order within the square of the barracks awaiting the orders to march. The governor sat down and began to sign one document after another. But before the marching order was placed for his signature, flashes of lightning played fearfully above, followed by sharp deafening claps of thunder, and answered by a rumbling subterranean noise not unfamiliar to the Cumanes.* The noise

* The energy of atmospheric electricity appears to decrease as we recede from the equator to the poles, thus sympathising with light and heat; for it is in tropical countries that the most terrific

approached, and was louder as it came on. The ground trembled, shook, and upheaved. The heavy stone buildings that seemed destined to endure through ages, toppled and fell in a few seconds, like houses of cards built up by children

flashes of lightning, and the loudest bursts of heaven's artillery occur. Awful as these manifestations are occasionally in our temperate climate, they are but as a skirmishing of outposts to the general engagement of armies, when compared with inter-tropical displays. Humboldt, during his residence at Cumaná, witnessed a coincident development of electrical action, peculiar atmospheric phenomena, and terrestrial disturbance during what is called the winter of that region. From the 10th of October to the 3d of November, a reddish vapour rose in the evening, and in a few minutes covered the sky. The hygrometer gave no indication of humidity; the diurnal heat was from 82·4° to 89·6°. The vapour disappeared occasionally in the middle of the night, when brilliantly white clouds formed in the zenith, extending towards the horizon. They were sometimes so transparent, that they did not conceal stars even of the fourth magnitude, and the lunar spots were clearly distinguishable through the veil. The clouds were arranged in masses at equal distances, and seemed to be at a prodigious elevation. From the 28th of October to the 3d of November, the fog was thicker than it had been before; and the heat at night was stifling, though the thermometer indicated only 78·8°. There was no evening breeze. The sky appeared as if on fire, and the ground was everywhere cracked and dusty. About two o'clock in the afternoon of November 4th, large clouds of extraordinary blackness enveloped the mountains of the Brigantine and Tartaraqual, extending gradually to the zenith. About four, thunder was

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in their play, and demolished by a breath. The governor never rose from his seat. He was crushed to the earth. The soldiers fled in terror; many fleeing from Death to Death, seeking escape from one building only to be struck down and overwhelmed in the *debris* of another. Horses

heard overhead, but at an immense height, and with a dull, and often interrupted sound. At the moment of the strongest electric explosion, two shocks of an earthquake, separated by an interval of fifteen seconds, were felt. The people in the streets filled the air with their cries. A few minutes before the first, there was a violent gust of wind, followed by large drops of rain. The sky remained cloudy, and the blast was succeeded by a dead calm, which continued all night. The sunset was a scene of great magnificence. The dark atmospheric shroud was rent asunder close to the horizon, and the sun appeared at 12° of altitude on an indigo-ground, his disc enormously enlarged and distorted. The clouds were gilded on the edges, and bundles of rays reflecting the most brilliant prismatic colours extended over the heavens. About nine in the evening, there was a third shock, which, though much slighter, was evidently attended with a subterranean noise. In the night between the 3d and 4th of November, the red vapour before mentioned had been so thick, that the place of the moon could only be distinguished by a beautiful halo 20° in diameter. The vapour ceased to appear on the 7th; the atmosphere then assumed its former purity; and the night of the 11th was cool and extremely lovely. This account, with similar details from other observers, seems to indicate a more intimate relation than is generally admitted between the interior of the earth, and its external atmosphere.—*Milner's Gallery of Nature.*

and oxen, and all the other animals of the city, ran about the streets crying in their terror, and adding to the confusion and the danger. It seemed as if *Dies Iræ* had come to the devoted city. The prison doors were opened, and the order given, "*Escape for your lives!*"

Thus was Cumaná, within three centuries, totally destroyed a third time by an earthquake.

Among the prisoners in the city of Cumaná, was Hills the American, the murderer of Gerilleau. Sentence had not yet been passed upon him; indeed, his trial had not yet concluded, according to the dilatory law custom of the country. He was sent on, from the Caña to Maturin, and thence to Cumaná to await his trial. In the meantime, it was supposed that depositions were being taken down from the witnesses of the crime, and also of the nature of the general social intercourse of the two men. I myself had been called in to the lawyer's office, probably the attorney-general, where I met Gerilleau's nephew, who was then a merchant in Maturin. The evidence I gave was, that they were both men of strange uncontrolled

tempers, and that I long feared murder to be the inevitable termination of their frequent squabbles; but that it would have been impossible to say which was to be the victim, as each had threatened the death of the other, and that I believed they were, both of them, men who, in such a case, meant what they said. The particular act, however, was not, as far as I knew, premeditated, but sprung out of the provocation and excitement of the moment.

If the "Provisorios" had succeeded in subverting the government, no doubt Hill's case would have been hurried, and he shot for the murder, as Gerilleau's brother was state minister of finance under the government, and had joined the insurgents. When he found their case irretrievably hopeless, he decamped to another country, doubtless intending, like Demosthenes, running—"to live to fight another time." But in his hurry to escape, he forgot to leave behind the treasury cash, an oversight which perhaps he could explain to his own satisfaction, and acquit himself of moral turpitude ; but the emptying of the treasury with

the aggravation of flight, must have left a damning impression of his character on the minds of the government party.

The day of the destruction of Cumaná was fraught with perhaps a lifelong misery to many persons in that city. To the prisoners whose liberty, and, of some, lives were forfeited, any change whatever that could affect them was beneficial. Especially must they have welcomed the cause that set them at liberty, even though it were the destruction of a city, and the wholesale loss of human lives.

Hills took advantage of the liberty he had received in common with the other prisoners, and lost no time in taking a passage for another place. May the regret which, presumably, he takes with him through life for sending an unprepared soul untimely to its eternal reckoning—"unhousel'd unanel'd, with all his imperfections on his head," work repentance in the homicide, and make him a useful, rather than a hopeless man !

CHAPTER XVI.

ENTRY OF SOTILLO'S ARMY.

THE Provisorios kept up the delusion of their ability and intention to drive off Sotillo to the last moment. At about three o'clock one day, they all passed out in battle array by Punta Plata. The town's people were told that they were then going out to a decisive battle. I had never yet seen soldiers going out to fight, as the besieged Provisorios had hitherto taken some other route. Nor have I seen any since. But in this march to action, it seemed to me that the officers were unnecessarily fatiguing themselves, and must have had considerable strength to be able to fight when the fight came. Before each company danced, (yes, I think, danced is the proper word,) an officer brandishing his drawn sword, while he kept on muttering some words, which, if intended to keep alive the courage of the men, must have failed,

for it seemed like a prosy incantation, or like the monotonous drone of a schoolboy in getting up his lessons.

I was sorry to see my old friend M. Griselle with his two sons in the company. The old gentleman was shaking his sword and muttering, and occasionally he performed his pirouette. I thought of his rheumatic arm. Poor old gentleman ! he must have joined or have fled ; but in either case, his property would be subject either to destruction or confiscation. I know he afterwards pleaded compulsion and was pardoned. But he had for a long time to run the gauntlet of the jeers and sarcasms of even some of the Reds, that during the war had skulked off to Trinidad.

A young officer from Cumaná pirouetting like a maniac attracted my notice. He was quite unique, being short, thin, and loosely knitted, and fastened to his sword case, for I could not make out that it looked at all fastened to him. He jumped about making sword thrusts sometimes in the face of his company, then at one side of the street, and then at the other side. He had learnt of Lady Mac-

beth, probably, to "screw his courage to the sticking-place;" but the encouraging words he uttered came out as of one suffering from a fit of ague. Such a little weazen soldier could have been eaten up by a Caribbe.

There was no fighting that day, much to the surprise of many. At night the soldiers returned marching to the sound of music. Then there was a grand ball. Maturin was getting fashionable in balls. Lights flashed, gold lace shone, and swords were abundant ; ladies few.

At twelve at night the town was quiet. Not a sound was heard excepting the occasional challenge of the sentinel—"Halté—Quien Vive?" and the response "Venezuela ! Ciudadano," by the adventurous night-walker.

At five in the morning Ferdinand, a mulatto of the place, and connected with a French family, but with us as man of all work, aroused us with the startling cry—"Los Provisorios estan á fuera ! La Ciudad es desocupado ! Ninguno sentinelas en la calle !" The soldiers are away ; the city is deserted, not a sentinel in the street.

I jumped up in great trepidation. What should I do, with my single family in an empty city, given up to the fury of a disappointed soldiery? In truth there was not a soul in the street. As I looked out from the middle up and down, it seemed as if some catastrophe had occurred, and I was solitary, in a city of the dead. The clean, quiet street, the white houses, even the moon shining cold and silent seemed obnoxious to me. I would rather, I thought, be marching with the absconders, one knows not whither, hunted, perhaps to death, than remain in this dreadful solitude and incertitude.

I ran to my next neighbour, a foreigner, and was assured by his presence, and more so that he was satisfied that no harm would happen while our flag was up, and we kept ourselves unobtrusively within. In less than an hour we had several native women with their children and some baggage craving asylum from the "desperados," as they were pleased to call the government party. I could not refuse them, and they huddled themselves together in a room in the yard.

At eight in the morning was heard martial

music in the distance. It betokened the approach of the dreaded Sotillo with his army of occupation. But even that music with the cause which it signalled was a relief from the deathlike stillness that had existed. Suspense is less endurable than the presence of the object of dread. As the sound drew nearer we all, that is to say, estrangeros, my wife with our two children, the African boy Johnnie, and I, went to the gate to see the soldiers pass. The Spanish women and their children kept away in their hiding place; and Ferdinand, not quite certain of his exemption from serving as an soldier, satisfied himself by peeping through a half-closed window.

The sound of horses' feet was distinctly heard, and presently came Sotillo, a very tall and powerful looking man, but exceedingly fat. He was very dark complexioned, and had a fierce countenance. A savage scowl passed over his face as he came by, and said loudly—"The foreigners who came to the country to earn bread should be ashamed to encourage the natives in their disaffection to a patriotic government; and that they

deserved, every one of them, to have short work made with them."

No doubt I was dreadfully afraid, for I am not of the class of "*fear noughts*," but the injustice of the remark, as far as my knowledge of the facts extended, raised my ire above my fear, and I could then have stepped out and denied the charge. However he passed without a salutation from me, which I had intended as due to the despot of the time. But his son, or one of them, who came third, a fine young gentleman in appearance, tall and stately, seemed to have a kindly eye. Ferdinand whispered, "Es hijo de Sotillo,"—Sotillo's son. To him I raised my hat right in the sight of his father; and the young man, much to my delight, returned the salutation in a gracious manner.

The general was accompanied by about fifty officers, who formed a guard of honour. Next came a long line of cavalry, I thought they would never end. Such a number of horses at one time I had never seen before. At last came a mongrel procession of animals and men; men on mules,

men on donkeys ; riders on saddles, riders on bare backs : riders guiding their asses with bridles, with ropes, with bejuco, or bush liane hastily dragged from trees ; then came riders on donkeys free of bridles, making the donkey's mane do one part of the service, and directing the animal to the right or left by a slap on the left or right ear, and quickening their motion by a thump of the heel on the beast's sides.

This heterogeneous cavalry with its equipments was followed by a regiment of Caribbes infantry, "Sotillo's men," as they were proud to be called ; "Sotillo's bloodhounds," as their enemies called them. Each was equipped with his bow and quiver of arrows suspended over his back, and shouldering a lance : his only clothing a narrow strip of girdle and the lapp. They were a fine healthy-looking, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, disciplined regiment ; their dark red skin and stately march harmonising with the dazzling lance heads aloft. But they were in ill-humour, and sadly disappointed. Sotillo had fed them on the hope of pillage, which he fully had intended to

gratify; but their beautiful visions, so long vapouring before them, of rum orgies in the streets and houses of Maturin, were rudely dissipated by the timely arrival of Monagas, who ordered military discipline to the soldiery while in the town on pain of death. Some of them, however, did get rum, and showed in miniature the wise policy of Monagas's prohibition. A few drunken Caribbes chased the men of the town, throwing their lance, and tumbling down in the effort. One I saw, who, with unsteady footsteps, yet threw a lance that stuck and quivered in the door through which a terrified citizen had escaped. Their corporals had much work in keeping these wild men in order, and they were marched out of the town that very afternoon.

I had occasion to go out into the streets, and as I got by a demolished barrier, an officer riding quickly had nearly a stumble; he turned round angrily, and seeing me approaching, haughtily ordered me to clear away the rubbish.

“It is not my work,” I replied.

“Make your little Negro do it, then.”

“It is not his work,” I answered.

“You helped to put it up, and by—— you shall remove it.”

“I did not—nor will I.”

The matter was shortened by a civilian running up and busily removing the wood; and Johnnie compromised between his dread of the officer, and his unwillingness to offend me by receiving a few sticks from the civilian and throwing them aside.

“Your money and influence raised these barricades.”

“I am too poor for that,” I answered the officer; “and I hate the cause of the Provisorios, as well as war of any kind.”

“Thou liest,”—he said, with a look of disdain; “but thou wilt remember me when we meet again.”

And he rode off.

“You have made an enemy, I see;” said an old Italian merchant to me:—“to-day should be a day for the repression of thoughts.”

“But he, as well as Sotillo, has charged me with complicity.”

“They are both generally correct, although mis-

taken in your instance. I am sorry to say,"—he continued, "that the *estrangeros* have behaved scandalously in this matter. For a little gain they supplied arms and encouraged the disaffection, and even the drunken display of to-day which might have led to serious results, is due to the cupidity of foreign rum-sellers, who, to gain a dollar would ruin a city. I do not quarrel with the justice of the *Provisorio* cause; but we who are free from the fighting should in honour refrain from meddling. This country," he continued—"is an *Eden* with its *Adam* and *Eve* on the one side to be ruined, and its *serpent* on the other to ruin; and they exchange characters occasionally, for the rebel of to-day is usually the government soldier of to-morrow. Poor devils! they are not patriots but partisans, always fighting for a faction in power or out of power."

"And the poor agricultural Indians," I said;—"that they should be dragged into this iniquitous fight!"

"*Esta te quieta, mi amigo. Mejor guardar silencio sobre esta cosa.*"

In a few days things began to wear the same quiet aspect as before. The former alcalde who had retired at the first entrance of the Provisorios and came in with the besieging army, resumed his authority which he executed with his usual urbanity. Once, however, I saw him in a dreadful passion, and then he raved in the street like a boastful blackguard. He had met with a pardoned Provisorio, and must needs taunt him with the failure of the rebellion. "If,"—said the other,— "we had had less cowardly traitors, such as you, it might have been otherwise." There was no doubt that the alcalde was living in a glass-house, for he was furious at the retort.

Several persons who had taken a neutral part, by retiring to Trinidad or Saint Thomas, were dropping in to Maturin by twos and threes. They were looked upon very coldly by the two parties ; but in their neutrality, they showed wisdom. *Decorum est pro patria mori* may be quite right in the case of a condemned criminal, not otherwise ; but the *et dulce* is doubtful in any case, it is a *pia fraus*, and lacks evidence.

When Sotillo left Maturin with his army, it was to pursue the retreating Provisorios. Scouts in advance and in the bush, at each side of the road, scoured the country, bringing in prisoners to the main body. All who were taken with arms and accoutrements were treated as *in flagrante delicto*, and shot, and their heads stuck on poles. A few of the notable ones, who returned quietly to Maturin, were taken away, it was said, to Caracas, to be tried; but it was rumoured that they were taken away to the camp of Sotillo, who made "short work with them."

CHAPTER XVII.

ANSELMO THE SLAVE.

AMONG a group of black women and children, domestic slaves, who passed every day at early morning, to and from the Agua'a, with their taparas of water, I frequently observed a man, with his taparas also, laughing and chatting, and being laughed at and chaffed by his female companions and the children.

I understood that he was a slave. His name was Anselmo.

I sometimes amused myself by drifting down, in a corial, with the stream of the Guarapiche and then turning homewards, tested my ability to get back in less than thrice the time expended in drifting. One day, while thus engaged, I was hailed by Anselmo, who stood on the bank of the river. He was very gracious, and invited me to land and look over his place.

“ Is this your cornuca ? ”

“ Yes ; and I am glad to welcome you to it. Come up and see the improvements.”

I went up and sat on a log within the house, while he entertained me with an account of some improvements he had made on his property, and the further improvements he contemplated.

It was with some hesitation that I told him that, having seen him with the slaves, I had erroneously considered him to be a slave also.

“ O,” said he, laughing, “ You are not the first that has fallen into that error. I am not particular. I associate freely with all classes, from the family of Don Arnaldo, down to his cook or butler. In this world, a man ought never to be proud, for the fortunes of men are daily changing.”

While I continued sitting, a young man came in, who eyed me curiously, and then looked at Anselmo, whose manner entirely changed from the frank air he had observed towards me, to that of a dog at his master’s approach, when he feels that he merits a whipping. I suppose a good

artist could have shown a family likeness. Anselmo told the young man that I was a stranger, and had asked to be allowed to rest for a while!

The youth, after blaming Anselmo for some incomplete work which he had led the young man erroneously to believe to have been finished, sent him off to cut wood for the town house of his father's family, adding that he would take in hand the other work that Anselmo had left unfinished.

I learned from the young man that he was the son of Don Arnaldo, the owner of the property on which we were, and whose slave Anselmo was; that the negro was the laziest, most thievish, and lying of all the slaves in Maturin, and that he was a constant source of annoyance to the whole family, in whose house he was born. In his childhood, he had been petted and spoiled, said my informant, "especially by my mother, whom he deceives at pleasure, and who has lived to regret her mode of rearing the slave."

From that time, I always recognised Anselmo with considerable curiosity.

The next time I saw him he was in the street,

beckoning to a man, who had over his shoulders a sack containing earthenware. With curses, and threats, and feints of a preparation for a boxing match, Anselmo was inviting him to "come up and get his face smashed." The person addressed satisfied himself by laughing, and occasionally using some taunting expressions, while he pursued his road, which seemed to be Anselmo's road also. The slave was careful, however, to keep at a respectful distance, notwithstanding all his threats. Unfortunately for Anselmo, the man's sack fell, and some of the fragile articles it contained were broken. The disaster affected the temper of the owner of the sack more seriously than did Anselmo's bravado, and aroused his anger at the slave, who was laughing uproariously at his misfortune. He ran up to him and battered his head with the bag of ware until every article must have been broken up in many pieces.

Another adventure that Anselmo might have found to terminate more seriously, was on the day after the withdrawal of the main body of Sotillo's army.

Anselmo—always a busy-body—was left in charge of his master's (Don Arnaldo) deserted house—he and his family having thought it right to retire from Maturin while such company as Monagos and Sotillo was there ; instead of keeping within doors, as his master had expected him to do, he was induced to fraternise with some troopers in a liquor shop, doubtless with a hope of getting some drink, which was plentifully consumed in those few days.

It was not long before Anselmo began to retail, as his own sentiments, what he had probably heard at his master's table. It was a dangerous part of the argument that he took up, and there was nothing surprising in his being beaten out of the shop. The *regime* of the day was different from that of the days when the "Colorados," the government party, were shut out of the town by entrenchments and "bully negroes," and the nights passed in feasting and singing the faction-songs of the Amarillos. Being thus maltreated, he ought to have gone away quietly and "bided his time," as wiser men than he have done, and will always

do. But Anselmo was of the kind of men who live only in the present ; so as soon as he found himself clutching the ground in the street, he picked himself up, and, with himself, he picked up some stones, and having discharged them at his antagonists, took to his heels, as the last resource of a valorous man, and pursued his way home as quickly as he could.

If Anselmo intended his missiles to damage his enemies, he might well have been satisfied with the result, for one soldier had his head broken, and another had his hand badly bruised.

The Commandant of the troopers—a tall, portly old Sambo, of the negro and Indian races—with whom a child might fearlessly have played, but who, in times of Presidential faction fights, kept his enemies in fear, and his soldiers under discipline, sent out a guard to seek and arrest the slave.

I had picked up a friendly relationship with the commandant. The morning after the affray he was sitting with me, his horse held by an orderly at the door, when poor Anselmo came stealthily in alone, trembling.

"General," he said, "allow me to kiss your feet." So saying, he stooped down and performed the ceremony of his complete submission. He then "confessed that he deserved to be shot for his bad behaviour," but excused himself by saying that "the soldiers had allowed him to drink more spirits than was good for him; that his wits having left him, he had talked not his own words, for he was but a poor slave, and could not be expected to hold any opinions, but had merely expressed what he had often heard his master say. He begged, therefore, that he should not be punished for his master's opinions, of which he had been the foolish exponent. He was sorry that, when the soldiers kicked him out, as he confessed now they were quite right in doing, he did not quietly go away, forgetting the kicks in the glasses they had drank together. But the beating he had received from them *was* severe." Here Anselmo rubbed his body as expressive of pain, while a comical expression overspread his countenance as he perceived the commandant inclined to smile.

“ You may thank Providence and the Saints,” said the commandant, “ that my guard has not brought you to me, for then I should have ordered you to be shot, you rebel worm, as I hope it may be my good fortune to exterminate that nest of scorpions that claim you as their property. But you must not go free altogether; and you may bless your good fortune that those men whom you stoned are not present here to-day, else I could not be responsible for your life.”

So saying, he took Anselmo out, and gave him in charge to the orderly, from whom he took his horse and mounted, ordering them to follow.

At the shop door, at which the affray had occurred, Anselmo was made to lie down, and the soldier, by order of his commandant, flogged him severely.

There are some persons who cannot learn wisdom even from Dame Experience’s school. Anselmo was one of these *malheureux*. He was so much engrossed by ideas of his own importance, so overtaken and imbued with overweening self-conceit, and his over-indulgent owners kept

the reins of mastery so loosely, that Anselmo was really less a slave to Don Arnaldo and La Doña Felisa, than to his own vanity, which led him into continual mischief and trouble.

The last time I saw Anselmo was after the town was restored to its former quiet, the government soldiery departed, and an amnesty granted to all who had taken arms who would return to their homes and submit to the government.

A tall negress, slave to the Monagos family, and a regular water-carrier from the Aqua'a, with whom I had frequently seen Anselmo in company, acting his impudent gallantry, fell out with him. After excited language, not improving in courtesy of expression or modulation of tone, came blows, and silence only broken to give emphasis to each aimless blow from the man, and each well-directed butt of the head on his chest and abdomen, inflicted by the woman. It must be confessed, though with some disparagement to his manhood, that the first blow came from Anselmo, for when was our hero's courage not great against women and children? But he met

with a virago in the female slave, who was perhaps a descendant from the she-warriors of Africa, for she ultimately stripped him of his raiment, and sent him home howling, and holding up the tatters, amid the jeers and laughter of the crowd gathered to witness the fight.

It is said to be an ill wind that blows no good. Anselmo's troubles with the troopers and this woman brought him gain—the reward of virtue—Dame Fortune being blind and Doña Felisa gullible. He persuaded his old mistress to believe that he was suffering persecution from the partisans of the Monagos faction, solely because he was the faithful and unfortunate slave to a family of malcontents. Thus persuaded, the old lady thought for a time no indulgence too great for the weaknesses of her persecuted slave, who, as is well known, held the comfortable opinion that as he was fellow-chattel with all his master's goods, his value as a slave was enhanced by his appropriating to his own use whatever good things of the household came in his way.

He has been often heard to say, indeed it was

a favourite instance with him, out of hearing of his master's household, that his master's bag of rubbish was less valuable than his bag of gold; and that Anselmo hungry was worth fifty pesos less to his master than Anselmo full of good meat and vino-tinto from the larder and cellar.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MATURIN THE CAPITAL.

CUMANÁ was the head and front of the insurgent movement, and the chief cause, consequently, of all the late bloodshed throughout the republic. She was, therefore, said her opponents, punished and justly. Even nature had aroused itself to shake the city to the dust; and no doubt the superstition of the people saw in the earthquake the destroying angel sent to the camp of the Assyrians.

As the head of a state, Cumaná had been found to be a traitress to her sister states of the republic,—even now she was but a nest for traitors—her children by their frequent treachery had forfeited the good faith, and trust, and confidence of the nation, and therefore her privilege in the state was to be destroyed. Punished by God, and degraded through her own acts, by her incensed country,

she was no longer to hold up her head among the chief cities of Venezuela.

Maturin, which had been decoyed into the sin,—a besetting sin of this warlike little town, it must be confessed,—and punished, and forgiven, was to rise above Cumaná the temptress, and rule over her.

Putting aside other considerations of policy; the central position of Maturin, her being the great focus of the agricultural wealth of the state, her proximity to Trinidad and several other foreign islands by her navigable river of Guarapiche, would render her appropriately the capital of the state. And perhaps an additional potent reason was, that she was the family-town of the most influential family in the republic, and in the vicinity of their princely possessions. The government officials were ordered from Cumaná to Maturin, and a day appointed for the public entry of the state-governor into the new state capital. On the afternoon of the appointed day, every body who had a black coat, and could procure the more easily obtainable horse, mule, or

donkey, rode out to do honour to su Excelencia ; and crowds of poorer people met him on the way.

“ The dumb men throng’d to see him, and the blind
To hear him speak ; the matrons flung their gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchiefs,
Upon him as he pass’d :
The nobles bended ; and the commons made
A shower and thunder, with their caps and shouts.”.

SHAKESPEARE.

It was a day of general enthusiasm. Long-resident foreigners and even recent strangers joined in the jubilee in hopes of prosperous days for the rising city. And no doubt many hearty prayers were offered, that the first governor of the newly honoured city might be blessed with a long life of happiness, and the state ruled with equity and wisdom.

The governor was a middle-sized, lantern-jawed oldish young man, or youngish old man, it was difficult to say which, with a long aquiline nose, and of fairer complexion than the generality of Venezuelans.

Two or three weeks after his Excellency made

his public entry into Maturin, I had some public business to transact, and went to his office. There I saw an old gentleman whom I had often met before the rebellion. He had taken arms and sided with the government; but his son had attached himself to the rebels, and had left Maturin with them on the night previous to the entry of Sotillo. The father professed not to know where his son was, nor whether he was dead or alive: but he was seeking to have his name erased from the list of the proscribed, the continuance on which list he considered as a blot on the previous well-known loyalty of the family to the faction of the Colorados; and if the young man were alive, he hoped that the act of clemency would reclaim him to his fealty and his home. The old man was paying court to the governor in the hope of gaining his good will and help towards the object of his desire. But his Excellency was too transcendental to notice a suitor of the old man's stamp. His personal deportment to the Maturineros was not popular, although no charge could be laid against the rigidity of his rule; and the gentlemen

who had honoured him by a public entry were finding out that he could see nothing good, nothing worthy out of Cumaná. He seemed to have believed that he came to govern a conquered town according to law; and was not required to conciliate its people by personal urbanity, or to show them even common civility. He lacked the knowledge of what any man, to say nothing of a governor, owes to himself. "It is well worth while,"—says Socrates,—"to learn how to win the heart of a man the right way."

A writer very properly says that "*a proud man never shows his pride so much as when he is civil.*" Another writer says that "*there is this paradox in pride; it makes some men ridiculous, but prevents others from becoming so.*" The paradox ceases when ridiculous pride bears its own patronymic "puppyism."

"Pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps;
And pyramids are pyramids in vales."

YOUNG—*the Complaint.*

Like master, like man. An overgrown youth and quondam acolyte of the church here, who

until now flourished in the adapted cast-off sables of the priest, by a stroke of fortune was elevated to a stool and desk in the office. He did not know the old gentleman suitor now, as his master would not notice him ; although he formerly was glad to sing for the old man's family in payment for hospitable treatment.

His Excellency was busy brushing a pair of trousers which he held in his hand over a chair ; his bedizened official coat hung on another chair. He had no jacket on, but his trousers and shirt were strictly *a la mode*.

“ See what that man wants,” said the governor. I spoke out loudly my request in inelegant Spanish, much to the diversion of my grinning acolyte friend, who, by-the-bye, was accustomed to hear my Spanish. “ Tell him,” answered his Excellency, in grave tones, and without deigning to look at me ; “ tell him this is not the place to apply.” I did not wait to get the information, such as it was, at second-hand, from the acolyte, to whom the governor, no doubt, wished it to be understood he had addressed himself, although

his eyes went no further than the lace of his official coat hanging over the chair.

It was the old gentleman suitor, who, as I was walking out, kindly directed me to the proper quarter for the transaction of my business.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF MATURIN.

THE institutions of Maturin, as far as I have witnessed them, may be divided into—

- I. Religious (*a*), or such as are solemnised by the Church only,
(*b*) or adopted by the people in their social festivities.
Of these there are (*a*), 1. Sunday Services ; 2. The way of the Cross ; 3. Unction ; 4. Funerals.
also—(*b*), 1. Customs at baptisms ; 2. Respecting the dead ; 3. Christmas Eve.

- II. Of the purely social institutions they have :

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Amusements. | Vicious | Cockfighting. |
| | Athletic. | Bull-baiting. |
| | Didactic. | The Drama. |
| 2. Education. | School and Home Studies. | |

It is a singular fact, at least not singular in some purely Roman Catholic countries, that as a rule the church-going people consist only of the women and children. On great festival days the priest persuades a few men to assist in the imposing processional pageantries which, to minds

suitably disposed, yield a stimulus to devotion. But the bulk of the population keeping correct note of times and seasons, celebrate them more by home and social festivities; busying themselves on those days, in cooking dainty dishes and in sending out presents to their friends and neighbours, and receiving in return. In this friendly interchange of civilities, the Maturineros could appropriately adopt the motto, "*hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*" It were uncharitable and untrue to say that their religion was solely of a gastric nature; yet it is difficult for the most impartial to limit the importance placed by these people on the culinary observance of solemn festivals.

The great procession is that of "*the stations to Calvary.*" On this occasion altars are erected in two of the principal streets. Flags and costly cloths are exhibited at the windows of houses, and a great crowd of worshippers and sightseers throng the way. The priest and his staff of singers, with a large number of girls of all ages and well-dressed people of both sexes, followed

by a crowd all cleanly clothed, promenade the streets. At each station prayers are said and hymns sung.

A very solemn procession is that for the administration of the viaticum, or the sacrament of the blessed Eucharist (or it may be of extreme unction, for I am not certain), to the dying Christians. In the still time of Vespers, the sweet soft voices of pious women, aided by boys and the rich sonorous tones of the priest and senior choristers of the Church, are heard chanting reverentially the awe-inspiring music ascribed to Saint Gregory. As they approach you perceive each female dressed in white, and holding in her hand a lighted lantern. A glance shows you the earnest devout faces going prepared to meet the Bridegroom in the chamber of Death. These ignore Death, for to them it is a new life, a betrothal, an entering into the marriage feast. They are like the virgins going out to meet the Bridegroom, with expressions of chastened joy, their lamps filled, and trimmed, and lighted. Such is not an unlikely first impression on wit-

nessing the night procession to the sick chamber.

Funerals vary in solemn grandeur according to the prices paid to the Church; from the mutterings of the solitary padre preceding a plain mean coffin—a few pesos; to the full vocal orchestra of the Church, acolytes in cassock and surplice with smoking censers, and lofty gilt crucifix—for many pesos.

In baptism, not only do the sponsors make gifts to the child, but the friends of the sponsors show their regard for them by bringing gifts also. The parents, for the day, are merely satellites to the sponsors who, during life, exercise, when they please, an authority over the destiny of their god-child. The deference paid by youths to their god-parents is very remarkable. They kiss their hand, or with crossed arms and bowed heads ask for a blessing, in house, or street, or market. The formality surely carries with it much of the genuine spirit of disciplined obedience and Christian love and duty; and is, as to results, less formal than the uninterested sponsorship of some people in other than Papal churches.

I have already spoken of wakes for the dead in the account of the night spent with the Compondron family, when the mother of the dead child was forced to join in the dancing.

Christmas Eve wakes are quite an institution here; and to those who can admire the quick and pungent wit of the *Waits* in their rhythmic address to the inmates; a few hours waiting with them would not be ill repaid. They come a company of about twelve, and chant a Christmas carol; then in the same strain they ask for the alguinaldo or gift. If you are friendly to the custom, and are prepared to reward them for their singing, although perhaps you have been aroused from pleasant dreams; you send them some hot coffee and a few cigars: or better yet, you invite them in. After partaking of your hospitality, they go out into the street and sing your praises. But should you be stingy from parsimony or principle, and heed not their call for alguinaldo, look out, and see that you be thick skinned. The burden of their request will descend to something like the following:—

Give us the alguinaldo,
Give us the alguinaldo,
Even if it be *un cigarro*.

Give us the alguinaldo,
Give us the alguinaldo,
Let it be but *buena noche*.

Oh ! ho ! Señor miser,
Oh ! ho ! Señor miser,
Can you show *un sobre de candela* (a candle end).

And then some peculiarity of your person, or habit, of which you never probably had an idea, but which now strikes you as certainly not untrue, is made a jest of in song, and you feel sorry that the custom of the city was not complied with, and the required alguinaldo given.

Sunday afternoon is the time that the *habitués* of the cock-pit assemble to witness the sport. The establishment was opposite to my residence, but the entry was by an alley. By standing on a chair at the window, I could see the excited faces of the men around the pit, and in any part of the house hear their "bravos" during some interesting passage of arms of the belligerent cocks. The priest was apparently indispensable at these *Sun-*

day *Cock Fights*; and although my prejudiced sense of propriety was outraged by his invariable presence as patron of the cock-pit, he, no doubt, was justified in his own conscience.

Bull-fights are encouraged here by the merchants, as they tend to give an impetus to trade. Although these exhibitions are cruel to the animals and dangerous to the matadores or bull-slayers, they yet tend to encourage the race of skilful herdsmen and manipulators of wild cattle in the expert throwing of the lasso, lance, or knife, and in perfect horsemanship.

There is no permanent building here for a theatre. Palm leaves, timber, and boards are the principal materials for the construction of a temporary hall of Thespis. The stage and scenery are less than of the most ordinary kind. I saw the play of Molière's "*Le Médecin malgré lui*" creditably performed by a company of native amateurs. The only real woman was an old retired professional who acted the reconciliation scene with the wood-cutter, her husband, with so much heartiness, that he, a handsome, tall, young man,

must have wished her younger and more comely, or less demonstrative as she was so homely.

There was but one public school in the town, kept by a little man of amiable manners, whose wife, a good and sensible young woman, was a little inclined to be a virago. I do not know what induced a strapping Frenchman to imagine that the schoolmaster, of all men, had caused his wife to be unfaithful. Monsieur was certainly known to be a man of strong imagination. For instance, he seemed to have believed that his intimacy with Napoleon Buonaparte was broken by the emperor's neglecting his advice, and thereby causing his own ruin. He assisted to plant the Tree of Liberty in France, and was mainly instrumental in driving out Louis Philippe. The poor man had received a severe sabre cut on the head during some *emeute* in Hayti, which wound must have disturbed the equilibrium of his mind. One morning he went to every store in Maturin, proclaiming his wrongs: on the following morning he, with his gaunt old wife, who was as deaf as a post, walked into every store to explain away

the report he had so assiduously promulgated on the previous morning.

The schoolmaster is paid from the city funds. He teaches very well, some forty or fifty children of both sexes. The richer people send their children to Cumaná and Caracas to be instructed. The custom of home tuition prevails here. Books are scarce, but the children learn readily from their parents to read writing and to write on slates. A printed book of any sort in Spanish, or a Spanish newspaper, is highly prized as a medium for reading lessons.

CHAPTER XX.

TO THE LLANOS.

My application at the governor's office was for a passport from Maturin to the city of Bolivar, on the river Orinoco. The passport, thanks to the civility of the governor's neglected suitor, I obtained from the Alcalde of the town.

REPUBA. DE VENEZA.

Iefa. polita. del. Cann.

MATURIN, *Abi. 8 de 18—.*

Capl.

No. 96.

PASAPORTE.

Se le concede al Cudadano ingles Carlos Dance pa. Ciudad Bolivar con su familia. ANTO JOSE CAMINO.

Iefetera Politica.

SOLEDAD, *Abri 21 de 18 -.*

Se presentaron : pasen.

El Gefe Pco.

BALBINO ROMERO.

We had all suffered in health from the privations consequent on the siege. Prices were high, and the shock given to the agricultural and commercial business of the district, by the revolution-

ary disturbances, was likely to be felt for a long time. Some of the Indians were hiding away from both the contending parties, others were forcibly detained to fight, and great numbers were killed in battle. Labour was therefore scarce, and the cornucas and haciendas were depopulated. I thought it advisable to retreat to a larger city, containing more of the foreign element of population, and one that had escaped, and not very likely to undergo, the ordeal through which Maturin had passed and was still passing. My friends, the Italian merchant and the estimable Italian doctor, from different stand-points, endeavoured to dissuade me from the journey, placing before me the distance and perils of such an overland route, and pleasant pictures of the immediate future of Maturin.

To facilitate the travelling, I purchased two donkeys, one the best animal of the kind I have ever seen. It was fortunate for me that the Italian merchant was present at the purchase. As the American, from whom I obtained it, was leaving the place, my friend told him that one

thing only was wanting to complete the transaction, which was a receipt, duly attested, for the payment made for the donkey. He returned and gave me the receipt. Three days after I observed two decent-looking young Llaneros examining the donkey rather curiously, and then they claimed it as their property. The American had married into their family, and, according to their account, was changing everything of theirs he could lay hands on into money, with the intention, they believed, of absconding from the place and deserting his wife. They were unwilling to push the matter, on sight of the receipt, in consideration of their sister's feelings and the good name of the family. The American was worse a great deal than a crazy-headed young Scotchman, who being sent on from Trinidad by his brother, to arrange accounts with some mercantile houses here, preferred to walk up from the caña ; but being wearied almost to death, he, on entering the savanna, saw several donkeys, which he supposed to be common property, probably confusing republicanism with socialism, and

mounting one he came into the town, followed by a crowd laughing, hooting and jibing.

“ Ingles, teefy teefy burro !” said they, in their best English ; meaning, Englishman, you have stolen the donkey !

“ Buenos dias ! adonde es Maturin ?” was his constant reply, in his only Spanish, which he intended for—Good day ! where is Maturin ? His mercantile friends compromised the matter.

I engaged a guide, a tall, thin Sambo, of middle age, as straight as an arrow, and inured to all weathers. He introduced two men to me as desirous of joining the travelling party ; one was Mr M'Donald, a Scotchman ; and the other, M. Wilhelm, a German. The starting place appointed by the guide was a country house on the road, a short distance from the town. The two Italians came to see us off, and to wish us every blessing. As for M. José, the merchant, he tried to persuade us to leave our little daughter with him ; she had suffered most of all. He was a widower, and childless, and promised that he would soon be in Angostura, as the city of Bolivar is familiarly

called, from the narrowness of the river in that quarter. We knew he loved her, but we could not think of leaving one of our little ones behind us. He then produced a little packet, containing a necklace and money, which, he said, he had put up for Ninine, and he placed it in her hand. A few months later, she went to her eternal rest.

A mystery envelops the early life of this strange old man, whose character—decided, firm, but impatient of opposition—was as different from mine as one could well be from another. Yet, our growing intimacy was sometimes a little irksome to me, as our conversation, if conducted in French or Spanish, kept me too much on a strain. Nor was it better when he attempted to converse in English. He was of a thoughtful mind, and spoke anxiously of Christianity; but always as one who doubted, and yet would wish not to doubt. My way of speaking, respecting Christianity, was, at first, very surprising to him, trained, as he was, to the Romish view, but it had a growing attraction for him.

An old black man, a little fellow, scarcely more than skin and bones, but as agile as a monkey,

who tried to persuade me that he knew the secrets of the divining rod for detecting gold in the earth, and who ceased to worry me, and sneaked out of the project, only after I seriously agreed and arranged to visit, together, a spot said by him to be rich in the precious metal, was often with M. José. He told me that, in their younger days, they sailed together in a privateer. I heard a similar account from an old black gentleman, from the island of Margarita, who sailed with them in the same privateering vessel.

Old as my friend was when I left him, a cutlass would have been a fearful weapon in his hand, if he had had to use it on an enemy ; for he was tall and stout, of great strength, and with a pent-up temper like a smouldering volcano. But he was a just man in argument, and in his daily life.

We waited for our guide two hours after the time of his appointment, and thought it rather a bad beginning. But when he came, he explained that we could not have started conveniently until the moon had risen ; and moreover, that the time given was to allow us a margin, without any reference to himself.

C H A P T E R X X I.

CROSSING THE LLANOS.

THE order of our march was, first the guide's two donkeys, with provision for the road, knives, needles, cotton, &c.,—and our trunks. Then came our guide, with his fusil and little travelling bag. Next, my wife, on her favourite donkey, with his two paniers—one containing our little Ninine, and the other our little boy. I walked at their side. The rear was brought up by the donkey, with necessary travelling gear, followed by the two men.

The travelling that night was scarcely pleasant ; we were nearly, all of us, observing the taciturnity of strangers. The dullness was enlivened only by an occasional remark or question from my wife addressed to me, but intended to draw our silent guide out of his reticence.

At about four in the morning, two hours after

our start, we forded a stream, which the guide told us was the Rio Amana, and then ascended a precipitous bank, which the donkeys, with their load, did very well, with a little assistance from us in the way of pushing them up from behind at the steep places.

We were now on a high plateau, one of the Llanos,* the *loca plana* of the first Spanish "conquistadores," about 200 feet above the level of

*Comparatively low transverse ridges, running east and west, divide South America into three great districts. Through the northern district, the Orinoco flows; through the central, the Amazon; and through the southern, the La Plata. The country on each side of these rivers consists of enormous levels, to which the terms Llanos, Selvas, and Pampas are applied, distinguishing the regions bordering on these mighty streams, in the order in which they have been named."—MILNER'S *Gallery of Nature*.

"All around us, the plains seemed to rise to heaven, and this vast and silent desert appeared to our eyes like a sea which is covered with sea-weed, or the algae of the deep sea. According to the inequality of the mass of vapour floating in the atmosphere, and the alternating temperature of the breezes contending against each other, was the appearance of the horizon; in some places clear and sharply defined, in others wavy, crooked, and, as it were, striped. The earth, there, seemed to mingle with heaven. Through the dry mist, we perceived palm trees in the distance. Stripped of their leaves and their green summits, these stems resembled the masts of a ship, which one descries in the horizon at sea."—HUMBOLDT.

the sea, and covering an area of nearly 300,000 square miles.

“ High plains, immense, interminable meads,
And vast savannas, where the wandering eye,
Unfixt, is in a verdant ocean lost.” THOMSON.

The dwellers on these plains, here called Llanos or Mesas (table-land), are the Llaneros, men of the mixed races of European, Negro, and Indian. They are accustomed, from their childhood, to throw the lasso over wild cattle, or hurl the lance at their enemy, when at war; to throw the fiercest and most powerful bull, on foot or on horseback, and to be so much at one with their horses in equestrian feats, as to seem to be the returned Centaurs of the ancients. With strength, hardihood, and an indomitable spirit of independence, they are, nevertheless, the puppets of the ambitious, designing, master spirits of the country, who, by pampering their vanity and prejudices, make them willing and zealous tools in their too frequent interneccine wars.

At eleven o'clock that morning we got through the second range of the Santa Barbara mountains,

and halted in the vale on the west bank of the beautiful Mapirito. We camped under a clump of small trees, and while some of us gathered wood, the guide arranged the trunks, paniers, and bundles, to make a comfortable apartment for the mother and children. M. Wilhelm made up a fire, and a little while after we were all satisfying our hunger with the greatest cheerfulness, and with the ease of old acquaintance.

Our guide was a study. Without shoes or leggings, his trousers reaching only a little below the knees, with no knowledge of anything beyond the limits of a few roads and settlements of his own state of Nueva Andalucia, and the neighbouring one of Barcelona, to which we were journeying, and with no greater riches than his cornuca and paltry town house, his gun, and his little pack of merchandise, for he was a peddler, he yet seriously averred that there was nothing but the want of opportunity, which might yet come, to make him President of the Republic, and thereby as great as the Queen of Great Britain.

He was of a kindly nature; and after seeing

that the animals were all right by tying together two legs, and then setting them to browse within ken on the bank, or under clusters of trees, he would sit down and make toys for the children, such as a wooden knife, an arrow, or a paddle. While thus engaged he would sing to them or tell their mother of incidents that had occurred in that part of the country ; of the ravages committed by the Spanish and the Republican armies during the struggle for independence ; and he would also tell of smaller bands of freebooters who sprang up during those times of trouble, plundering in the name of Ferdinand of Spain, or the Republic, as the occasion presented itself. He pointed out at no great distance from our camping-ground, on our first day's march, where, in a skirmish with Republicans, the robbers having been defeated, were shot and their heads placed on poles. He possessed a silhouette portrait of General Paez, which he held in great reverence, and was often, as he informed us, in the forced company of those who would have killed him did they know that he held the picture in his possession.

So much had the guide unwittingly terrified my wife by his narration, that she insisted on carrying conspicuously an old trabuco or blunderbuss, without lock, throughout the remainder of the journey, to frighten away if not to kill evil disposed prowlers.

The Scot, M'Donald, beside the natural accent, the guttural shibboleth of his race, which from some lips sounds like richest music, seemed to possess little of the characteristics of his countrymen. He was painfully sensitive to the wants and wishes of others, and was happy only when conscious of the special goodwill of all about him. A German Jew, with whom he lived in Maturin, traded on his plastic and kindly disposition ; and it was partly to disengage himself from this unbearable thraldom, and also partly to oblige M. Wilhelm with whom he had formed acquaintance in the Jew's house, and who in persuading him to accompany him to Angostura was serving his own ends, that he undertook the journey.

M. Wilhelm was brusque in his manner, and every act of his seemed to spring from sheer

selfishness. But his coarseness of character was relieved by a comical assumption of good natured simplicity. He would ward off the shafts of anger evinced in the sharpest and most cutting hints and expressions by a seeming naive retort, or by immediately starting some new subject of conversation, or offering to sing a German song *à propos* to the vexed subject of dispute, which he always did with accompanying gesture to illustrate the passions of which he sang. For some time one could not well decide whether M. Wilhelm were knave or fool.

"You have not shown me your passport, Señor Guillermo," said the guide, whose name, by the bye, was Gabriel Vibenes, but he was usually styled "'Nor Gabriel."

"No."

"Why?"

"Too much trouble."

"Not at all; for if you have one, it must be on your person, or in your wardrobe contained in your pocket handkerchief."

"To get one," replied the German, "I should

have to return to Maturin. In that case what length of time would you require to wait for me?"

"Who knows?" said 'Nor Gabriel, laughing drily, "that would depend on the Alcalde or one or other of the disconsolate friends you have left behind."

"Ah," replied M. Wilhelm, with a deep sigh, "a good man's absence is always regretted."

"True, Señor; a remarkable man's escape is remarkably regretted. Let well or ill alone, let Maturin alone; you have had enough of it."

"Business was getting dull with you, M. Wilhelm?" said M'Donald, innocently.

"Dull, yes;" answered the guide, slyly. "Business was getting dull with the Señor, for business men's eyes were getting to be too bright; and the huntsman was in danger of going once too often to the chase."

M. Wilhelm had left Maturin principally on account of some gambling transactions that were considered contrary to the etiquette of gentlemen of the card and dice; and had received a quiet

intimation that he would have to render money or life. It is not certain whether the alcalde was interested in these transactions, or whether M. Wilhelm indulged his well-known propensity of paying nothing but on compulsion ; but it is certain that he did not apply for a passport, and thereby subjected himself to arrest and return to Maturin at any stage of the road within the state. He explained the difficulty to me in terms calculated to lead one to suppose that he considered his conduct in this matter perfectly justifiable.

"I know of nothing in the world," he said, "more rational than to turn the follies of others to our own advantage."

"But is it not more rational," replied M'Donald, "to assist in the endeavour to cure such follies?"

"Well," said M. Wilhelm ; "Goethe has put nearly those same words in the mouth of young Meister. And he makes the other party to answer that from his own experience such an attempt would seem to be a vain endeavour."

Here I interposed the remark—Franklin's poor

Richard says, "Fools make feasts and wise men eat them;" but I should like to hear M. Wilhelm reason out the assertion he made, by the quotation from Goethe.

"Well," replied M. Wilhelm—"let me see. Nothing in nature is lost ultimately."

"True; but I do not see what that has got to do with the question before us."

"But although nothing is lost ultimately," continued the German;—"Yet very many things get lost to present use; or at least get twisted out of their legitimate use." Now for an illustration to save thought. A youth with heavier purse than brains is sowing his money broadcast to reap happiness; but his harvest is the whirlwind: good. He loses; but who gains? Nobody, you might say, but you would be wrong; for these are the gainers (1) his paramours and purveyors, and (2) their thieving customers, and through them (3) the hard-worked slaves kept in their shops to sew, sew, sew, and weigh, weigh, weigh, and parcel off all day: and these last have dependents which may be only little brothers or sisters, or aged

parents who eke out an existence sufficiently attenuated to render them soon like Hannah More's 'spirits light as air,' 'compelled to starve at an unreal feast.' Now if a man of spirit, a wise man, if you will, appear, circumvent numbers 1 and 2 and to parody your English Pope—*catch* Folly's *coin* as it flies; don't you see that he stops the moral gap by transferring to his own wise use and dispensation what lust and thievery would have perverted?"

A very lame case, M. Wilhelm. I fail to see in the quasi wise man's appropriation, ought else than a transference from lust to lust; lust of the flesh to lust for gold; dishonesty to dishonesty, for the fool parts not with his money without cajolery. Nor do I see how by taking the place of numbers 1 and 2, you better the condition of number 3.

"Well, let me sing you a song to put the matter in its clearest light: pity I am the only German in the company." And off he went in his rich guttural, making one laugh at some of his droll impersonations, and for the time quite dispelling the unpleasant thoughts of the conversation.

CHAPTER XXII.

SECOND DAY ON THE LLANOS.

WE arose with the moon, packed up our chinchoras, and culinary materials; crossed the Mapirito; and resumed our journey on these now seeming interminable Llanos.

The early morning travelling, aided and comforted by the moonlight, was very pleasant. By nine o'clock we reached one of the mountain ranges of the Mesa Pelona, between which runs the broad river of Tonero, a tributary of the Guanipa, one of the contributaries to the Laguna Grande. For three hours we travelled on a pedernales, a very flinty way, the pebbles having no mercy whatever on our thin and flimsy Maturin shoes. It was, however, shaded all the way by large trees, and seemed more like an extensive but neglected park, than a forest. Descending at last from this pebbly but umbrageous tract, we

crossed the Rio Tonero, and mounting another range, traversed it and halted at a hamlet just at the outskirts of the wood and savanna. To get to this sleeping place, the guide told us that we had had half an hour's journey out of our course.

The tenement in which we were about to seek a night's rest, appeared miserably squalid and unprepossessing. Several skinny pigs were roaming about, of a very good size, but wanting to be filled out with good flesh and fat. In the common room was an unhinged door on two barrels, on which was laid out and covered what we afterwards found to have been a dead body. A woman was lying down on a bench apparently ill. To lodge in such a place, would be obviously inconvenient for all parties, so we took our lodgings in a kitchen and another small hut that may have been a calf-pen or pig-stye. But what with mosquitoes and fleas, we had to keep a forced vigil with the watchers of the dead.

Our guide, while describing to us the water resources of this part of the country, said that we were then in the midst of a series of streams,

namely, the Amana, Maparita, Tonero, Caris, and Guanipa, which empty themselves into the Great Lagoon, and issue thence in one large river, the Guanipa, taking the name of the lengthiest feeder to the Lagoon, until it flows into the sea at the Boca Vagre.

"I had a donkey drowned in that same river Guanipa;" said he, "but a great way down below the Lagoon, where the water is dirty, and the banks covered with slimy mud. One of the reasons for which I like this part of the country is, not only that it is more healthy and pleasant, but fewer accidents of that sort occur. It is the same water, but it is so clear and clean, that evil things are shy of it, and play their tricks mostly where it is dark and dirty. But, as I was saying," continued 'Nor Gabriel, "I had got to the river too late to cross over that night; besides, I had business to transact on the spot. So, as usual, I tied my donkey's legs and let him graze while I hung my chinchora in the house. I did my business with the master that night, and slept there. Early in the morning, while I was warming a

little coffee before my start, I heard splash ! splash ! sound from the river. That must be a big one, I thought, meaning, of course, a large fish. After drinking coffee, I went to look for my donkey ; but could not find him. My host's son came to assist in the search ; and there was a *maldito culebra de agua* (camudi or water constrictor), wrapped around the neck of my donkey ; only the two hinder legs of the poor creature remaining on the land. Life for life ; I killed the brute."

" I do not understand many things in this world ; and I never can find out why the *maldito* snake was made to kill my donkey, and why snakes are made at all, and many other animals that we should be glad never to meet with."

" Every thing that God made, Senor Gabriel," responded Mr M'Donald, " was pronounced *good*, and, no doubt, is so. If we have not yet found out their goodness, it is because we are yet in a state of ignorant inexperience. But in the case of snakes, I confess I hardly can see how their evil can ever be compensated by any good or possible use."

"It is not," said M. Wilhelm, "the evil of snakes that is a scourge to us; it is, as you rightly observe, our ignorant inexperience that turns blessings into scourges. Depend upon it, the time will come when snakes and other venomous reptiles will be found to be allies of the human race, and necessary to them; or, their mission in this earth being accomplished (a beneficial one, whether we know it or not), they will become extinct, and, like the antediluvian fossil monsters, contribute to our world's history.

"There is a fact, which is not an inapt illustration. See this plant, so commonly known here for its usefulness in taking fish; pluck a leaf, and rub your eyes, and you will be in agony, and in the certain way to blindness; apply, in time, the juice from the root of the 'huikeh,' which is indigenous to the same soil, and your eyes are saved; neglect the application beyond a certain stage of the inflammation, and even that remedy will fail to restore the sight. I can imagine a child living in a valley, at the foot of a range, say, of the Andes, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and,

contemplating the mysterious heights with childish dread, supposing that their gigantic proportions are there only to be dreadful receptacles for bug-bears, to keep him obedient, homely, and good. Yet, when he attains to young manhood, he fearlessly scales those heights, is delighted with the new far-stretching prospects, and learns that the dreaded mountains of his childhood are the objects of a wise and beneficent creation, and the water-sheds of refreshing and fertilising streams."

It was with a grim sort of satisfaction, after beating our bodies for hours to drive away the mosquitoes, and scratching flea-bites until we were sore, and wearying at the repeated "carambas" of our guide, whose power of patient endurance was evidently oozing away, that we heard him say, "Levantemonos, Señores! iremos á caminar." We retraced our yesterday's half-hour's worse than fruitless walk. After a couple of hours travelling, we descended, crossed a little stream, then mounted into an extensive savanna, which was one of the Monagos' cattle estates, or *hatos*. Leaving this, we entered an arenal—a vast sea of sand. Not a

breath of air was stirring ; and, only occasionally, a small cloud intervened to afford us temporary shelter from the burning sun. Then our torn shoes, tied in several parts to keep them on our feet, got buried in the sand, giving us the trouble of frequently refixing them, and affording us the opportunity of performing, but involuntarily, a somewhat similar feat to that of the pious pilgrims who travelled with unboiled pease in their shoes. I threw mine away in disgust. Another trouble was the want of water. Hitherto, our latest halting hour was two o'clock ; but this day, the hottest and most uncomfortable, we had to continue our march until the hour of four, when we reached the bank of the Rio Caris, another tributary of the Guanipa. One peculiarity of this river is that the place at which we encamped had but a very slight, scarcely perceptible, declivity. The banks were a very pretty sward, which, with the broad fording of pellucid water, atoned for the trial our eyes had had in gazing on the burning sands. Another peculiarity, but doubtless owing to the arenaceous soil, is the scrubby nature of the

dwarfed trees on its eastern side, principally the *mimiri*, sand-paper tree, the leaves of which are used by Indians for smoothing their arrows and war-clubs.

The first thing we all did, both man and beast, was to quench our thirst ; then, having unladen the donkeys, we stretched out our weary limbs under a patch of these same sand-paper trees. The cooking was then set agoing, and we all went for a refreshing bath a little distance down the stream. We were happy at dinner.

“One hears of the Saharas,” said M. Wilhelm ; “surely the burning sands of to-day cannot be much inferior. But it is the hot, suffocating, and poisonous wind of the Simoon,* and not the sand

* “Travellers have mentioned these winds (the Simoon) under the name of poisonous winds, or, more correctly, hot winds of the desert. Such, in fact, is their quality ; it may be compared to the heat of a large oven at the moment of drawing out the bread. The air is not then cloudy, but grey and thick, and is, in fact, filled with an extremely subtle dust that penetrates everywhere. This wind, always light and rapid, is not at first remarkably hot, but it increases in heat in proportion as it continues. All animated bodies soon discover it by the change it produces in them. The lungs, which a too-rarified air no longer expands, are contracted, and become painful. Respiration is short and difficult, the skin parched

merely, that makes those eastern deserts dreadful." The "Pedernales," or district of pebbles, of the morning, trying as were the flints thereof, was cool, and not unpleasant. But the open sand savanna, burning the half-naked feet, was almost unendurable."

"Your shoes are no' A-1, certainly," said M'Donald, "but you may conceive what we, who discarded our shoes altogether, must have suffered walking in the arenal and on the hot sands all the day."

"If it were not for the mornings, we should be miserable," said M. Wilhelm; "what pleasant

and dry, and the body consumed by an internal heat. In vain is recourse had to large draughts of water; nothing can restore perspiration. In vain is coolness sought for; all bodies, in which it is usual to find it, deceive the hand that touches them. Woe to the traveller whom this wind surprises remote from shelter! He must suffer all its dreadful consequences, which sometimes are fatal. The danger is most imminent when it blows in squalls, for then the rapidity of the wind increases the heat to such a degree as to cause sudden death. This death is a real suffocation; the lungs being empty, are convulsed, the circulation disordered, and the whole mass of blood driven by the heat towards the head and breast; whence that haemorrhage, at the nose and mouth, which happens after death."—VOLNEY.

times to watch the dawn and approach of sunlight, and to see the deepening colours painted by its glorious pencil."

"Such is morning always in the tropics," said M'Donald; "I have felt the not too cold yet bracing morning air of the Jamaica mountains, and watched the effects of the approaching sun on the sombre clouds, until it made its appearance and absorbed in its intense light all the beauteous colours it had lent. It suggests a beautiful simile. But you can tell us something of sunlight beauty." This he said, turning towards me; to which I replied, "I can tell you of one instance, not of the morning light, for that is '*played out*,' as the Americans would say. You say nothing of sunset; for hot and weary from travelling under a burning sun, you have no eyes for the appreciation of its setting splendour.

"My first sea voyage," I continued, "was from Kingston Jamaica to Havannah, or as the Spaniards say, Habana de Cuba. The man who attended to my cabin patronised me, much to my own satisfaction, probably not to his ultimately,

for a lesson that he studiously taught me I did not learn, and did not understand, until it was too late to do justice to my teacher. The 'lesson' was more than once stated by him—'That it was contrary to the rules of the company that one of their servants should ask for a gift from the passengers.' I know now what he meant; but at the time I could only think that it was strange for the company to attempt to teach grown-up men good manners. One afternoon, while the passengers were variously amusing themselves—a Bible-agent discussing with a Portuguese Dom the causes that led to the grape-vine disease; the manager of a Mexican mine in deep discourse with a sugar-planter of Jamaica on the phases of Protestantism; the ladies gallantly lighting cigarettes and presenting them to gentlemen—I sat watching the setting sun, with thoughts and emotions that even now I think not unbecoming a man. I had at the first seen my cabin-steward standing on one central spot for some time; when I directed my attention more particularly to him, he also seemed to be contemplating the effect of

the great source of light, and with deep emotion. He had chosen, I thought, a too prominent position, and his attitude was far too theatrical and studied to be consistent with the feelings pervading his soul-stirring study. His ruddy countenance shone in the sunlight, and his eyes seemed flooded. The sunset was really beautiful. But somehow I felt surprised, while I also felt pleased, that he could appreciate the shades and combinations of the colours and the form of the evening sky. It seemed to me, then, that such studies, with their accompanying thoughts, be-fitted more youths like myself, and women, and young persons, than men who had to buffet the storms of everyday life; and less so, hardy seamen, to whom scenery of this nature must be familiar signals of the weather and wind only. Of course, I was altogether in error, for I have since found delicacy and refinement of feeling among persons of rough exterior, and robust active life, and have been disappointed by their absence in persons of more elegance or sedateness of manners. The captain of the ship, a very

pleasant gentleman, was walking up and down short distances, and constantly passing by where I sat, so I stood up and said—‘Captain Douglas, is the steward really absorbed in contemplation?’ The captain turned and looked at the steward for a minute or two, while a comical expression rose on his otherwise grave countenance, then turning to me with a smile, he said, ‘I suppose he is contemplating the beauties of nature, but not voluntarily; indeed, I believe he is doing it defiantly, and if his present thoughts had expression it would not promote your edification. He is drunk, and with stolen liquor, and is condemned to stand there as a punishment during my pleasure.’

“To enjoy sky scenery there is no place like a vessel during a voyage. One has gauged the captain and the fellow-passengers, and is amused and satiated with the drolleries and peculiarities of the seamen, and is compelled to seek change from monotony by studying the ever-changing form and colours of the clouds. Here the student finds endless variety, some pleasure, and some

goodly lessons. The morning clouds teach him to hope ; the evening suggests eternal rest from earthly toil. And if he leave his cabin at night, not finding sleep, he finds the midnight clouds a book of thoughts, suggestive of Omnipotence and perfect peace."

"How in the case of a storm?" said M. Wilhelm.

"I remember," was the reply, "once passing from Cuba to Honduras in a mail company's schooner. I think her name was the 'Larne.' The captain for some reason of his own was desirous of evading the pilot as we gained the quays, and he took an unusual course. The pilot came out and gave us chase, but the wind increasing, we outstripped him. The night darkened, and the waves rolled higher and higher. It was impossible to stand without holding. I sat at the head of the steps leading to the cabin, my back and knees pressed against the sides of the doorway, while I held on also with my hands. The sea looked awfully wild. And then came a sound and a vibration that would have sickened one if it had not been

brief, and a relief from the tension of mind occasioned by the storm. A wave had lifted our tight little schooner over a coral reef, just sufficiently to save our lives, and to remind the captain that his caprice or cupidity had led him beyond the bounds of prudence. The captain and two chief officers acknowledged their fright. But even in that storm, while lives were being jeopardised, the heavens sustained a determinateness, a placidity in change, suggestive of Omnipotence and peace."

M. Wilhelm was not successful in the slinging of a chinchora. There is an art in it. A single turn of the pliable Indian cords, with two twists, and the chinchora is secure; one pull at the end of the cords and the chinchora is unslung. The German, with his usual care for himself, had, on our first encampment, slung his chinchora nearly over the bedding of the children, which was about the centre of our little camp; but on attempting to get in, he and his chinchora fell to the ground, fortunately without hurt to those below him. The guide, with a little muttering,

took the chinchora and slung it between two trees at a convenient distance. The next night M. Wilhelm, with some conciliatory remarks, got the guide to sling his chinchora for him ; but to-night 'Nor Gabriel refused rather surlily, and told him to learn. It was a wonder to us all how so tall a man as M. Wilhelm was, could sleep in so small a chinchora, which would not have been considered large for a child. It happened to-night that one tree was the central point of suspension for the four chinchoras ; and the guide who always spent nearly half of his sleeping time in blowing and keeping up the fire, had procured this night large wood, and an unusual blaze burned between him and Mr M'Donald, who with his usual reticence in matters personally inconvenient, said nothing to 'Nor Gabriel, but laughingly whispered to M. Wilhelm that he was being roasted.

" Oh, my dear fellow," said the German, loudly, and jumping out of his little uncomfortable chinchora, " why did you not speak sooner ? "

" Oh, no, M. Wilhelm, I could not think of submitting you to the torture."

"Not at all, my dear sir ; the torture is to know that you are suffering ; heat is always rather agreeable to me. Get up, I beg of you."

And M. Wilhelm gently forced the Scotchman to get up, who demurely looking at the diminutive chinchora, doubled himself up in it. No sooner had M. Wilhelm ensconced himself in Mack's commodious chinchora than he awoke the guide. "'Nor Gabriel,' said he "that fire is stifling the poor children to death."

"Ah, poor things !" replied the guide, " I did not remember that they are not accustomed to night fires."

And the simple-hearted old man got up and removed his fire a little away.

M. Wilhelm slept comfortably that night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOURTH DAY ON THE LLANOS.

THERE is a monotony in Llano travelling which embarrasses the describer; especially if he be writing from memory years after his travels. Of course I might insert some wonderful adventures; summon Leviathan from the deep in shape of a monstrous Caiman, and descending into his own domain, drag him trembling to land amidst the plaudits of a wondering group of Indian spectators; or by the accomplishment of Herculean labours obtain deification from the Dorians of the Llanos. But I am writing truthfully what passed within my own experience, and have neither talent nor ambition for a work of fiction.

To-day our guide, as we afterwards ascertained, treated us to a whole day's unnecessary journey by taking us to Aguassai. But, he said, it was in the route he had proposed to himself;

although not the direct road; and that it was necessary as a good resting-place during the approaching festival days.

We travelled all day on the table-land between the rivers Caris and Guanipa, now and then passing by some clusters of trees that afforded a little variety to the flat appearance of the land. Just before entering the town we came to a very steep descent, and were obliged to lighten the animals as much as possible. They all went down with a long run. It was surprising to find no water down there; but that was sufficiently accounted for by the greater depth of the basin of the Guanipa; and also that it was the end of the dry season. It was hard work ascending the other side of the ravine. We helped the donkeys by an occasional shove upwards, ourselves sometimes stumbling and losing our foothold. It was a relief to us to see the mountains of Aguassai, and to know that we were near; for the clouds began to gather, a sudden darkness overcast the scene, and we had to scamper into Aguassai to escape a torrent of rain that poured down while

we were entering the house of our guide's friends, and continued falling during the whole night.

After preparing and partaking of dinner, we made our arrangements to sleep, happy in the thought that we had not to be on the road for several days to come. For this was Thursday night, the eve of Good Friday, on which holy day, and until after Easter Sunday, we proposed to rest from travelling.

"What are you doing, Señor?" said 'Nor Gabriel to the German.

"Trying to mend my chinchora ropes, which I so knotted last night, that when you were ready to start this morning, not being able to unloose them, and fearing to be left behind, I was forced to use my knife and cut the Gordian knot.

"I am thinking," said Mr M'Donald, "that you have often to cut such knots."

"It was a knot of some kind that he cut when he ran away from Maturin," said the guide, 'Nor Gabriel, laughing.

"Do you know," said the German, addressing himself to Mr M'Donald in English, which made

me think the better of his earnestness ; "do you know that I am in a dilemma of thought ? Last night, just before you awoke me, and asked for an exchange of Chinchoras —." M'Donald at this stage was about to interpose a disclaimer that it was not he who had proposed the exchange : but he was interrupted by M. Wilhelm's hurriedly saying, "I know what you would say ; just so. Well, I was dreaming of knotty things and their speediest disentanglements. Strange that before we left this morning I was forced to cut the knot of my hammock rope. The general opinion is that dreams are a recognition of past circumstances, actual or mental ; and to a certain extent my dream was a confirmation of that opinion, for I was thinking, during the day, how certain entanglements have been unravelled, and difficulties overcome. But after my dream I had to get up and actually cut a knot. Now this is certainly an instance of precognition in my dream, to some extent ?"

"I should call it a coincidence," replied the Scotchman.

"What an ass I am, not to have thought of that ;" said M. Wilhelm.

"Sometimes," said Mr M'Donald ; "external objects and actions obtrude themselves and mingle with our dreams. Once I was dressing in a room ;—so I dreamt ; when some one from without was essaying to enter, I bolted the door, and on force being applied from the outside, I put on the bar. By-and-by I found the brick-ceiling above my head was being broken away. Thinking it useless to contend any longer, I hastily dressed, opened the door, and followed those who bade me. On entering a large low-ceiled hall with a number of Hindoo coolies, variously employed, a European called for a cutlass and asked me something that I did not hear. But I inferred that he was either according me a choice of the mode in which I was to die, or giving me the option of accepting death, or some alternative perhaps not less dreadful. But I could not hear what the man said ; for some one was continually splashing water behind me. I was twice, on the repetition of the question, obliged to turn round

and say, 'Cease to splash that I may hear.' When I awoke I found that it was the splashing of the boatmen's oars which had been the origin of my imaginary hearing, and also awoke me from an unpleasant dream."*

* The dream of the Good King Gontran. The late Hugh Miller in his interesting work, *My Schools and School-Masters*, when speaking of a cousin named George, says:—

"Some of his Highland stories were very curious. He communicated to me, for example, a tradition illustrative of the Celtic theory of dreaming, of which I have since often thought. Two young men had been spending the early portion of a warm summer-day in exactly such a scene as that in which he communicated the anecdote. There was an ancient ruin beside them, separated, however, from the mossy bank on which they sat by a slender runnel, across which there lay, immediately over a miniature cascade, a few withered grass-stalks. Overcome by the heat of the day, one of the young men fell asleep; his companion watched drowsily beside him, when all at once the watcher was aroused to attention by seeing a little indistinct form, scarce larger than a humble-bee, issue from the mouth of the sleeping man, and leaping upon the moss, move downwards to the runnel, which it crossed along the withered grass-stalks, and then disappeared amid the interstices of the ruin. Alarmed by what he saw, the watcher hastily shook his companion by the shoulder, and awoke him; though, with all his haste, the little cloud-like creature still more rapid in its movements, issued from the interstice into which it had gone, and, flying across the runnel, instead of creeping along the grass-stalks and over the sward, as before, it re-entered the mouth of the sleeper, just as he was in the act of awakening. 'What is

"It is strange ;"—continued Mr M'Donald, in a musing manner, "that the mind can be engaged the matter with you ?" said the watcher, greatly doomed : what ails you ? 'Nothing ails me,' replied the other, but you have robbed me of a most delightful dream. I dreamt I was walking through a fine rich country, and came at length to the shores of a noble river ; and just where the clear water went thundering down a precipice, there was a bridge all of silver which I crossed ; and then, entering a noble palace on the opposite side, I saw great heaps of gold and jewels ; and I was just going to load myself with treasure, when you rudely awoke me, and I lost all.'

"The above story is by no means uncommon in the Highlands, and the writer has frequently heard it related by an old native of Ross-shire—who firmly believed it—as an indisputable evidence of the immortality of the soul, the 'little indistinct form' being assumedly the soul of the man, in full life, sense, and motion, while his body was wrapped in the death-like torpor of sleep. And he further stated that in the Highlands, under peculiar circumstances, the little form has been seen leaving the mouths of certain persons at the last gasp of life.

"It is a curious fact that a similar legend, having, however, a much more practical conclusion, is related of Gontran the Good, King of Burgundy, who lived, reigned, and died so far back as the sixth century. One day, Gontran, wearied with the chase, and attended but by one faithful squire, laid himself down to rest near a small rivulet and soon fell asleep. The squire, while carefully guarding his royal master, with great astonishment perceived a small beast (*bestion*) emerge from the king's mouth and proceed to the bank of the rivulet, where it ran up and down for some time, seemingly wishing to cross the water, but unable to do so. Thereupon the squire, determined to see the end of the adventure, drew his sword and laid it over the stream from bank to bank. The

when the body is in a state so much resembling death."

"I do not know," replied M. Wilhelm,—"that the mind works when the body is in a perfect

little animal seeing this improvised bridge, ran over it, and speedily disappeared in a small hole at the foot of a hill on the opposite side. After remaining there for a very short period, it returned along the sword, and into the king's mouth. Soon after, Gontran awakening, said that he had just had a most extraordinary dream, in which he thought that he had crossed a foaming torrent on a bridge of polished steel, and entered a subterranean palace full of gold and jewels. The squire then relating what he had seen, the king, on his return to his palace, summoned all the learned men in Burgundy, and, having stated the whole occurrence, demanded of them the immediate interpretation thereof. For once in the world's history, the opinion of the *savans* was unanimous ; they declared there could be no reasonable doubt on the matter. A large treasure was concealed under the hill, and, its existence being by a special miracle disclosed to the king, he alone was destined to be its possessor. Gontran immediately set a great number of men to work, the hill was undermined, and the treasure discovered. Receiving this treasure as an especial gift of Providence, Gontran devoted the principal part of it to purposes of charity and religion. To commemorate the wonderful event, the king ordered that the hill should ever after be termed Mont Tresor, the name which it bears at the present day.

"Claud Paradin, in his *Symbola Heroica*, has recorded the wonderful dream of Gontran by an engraving descriptive of the crossing over the stream by the *bestion* on the sword-bridge, and with the motto : 'sic sopor irrupti ;' so sleep came upon him."—*Chamber's Book of Days.*

sleep. When the body is in a semi-conscious state, the mind, or that part of the mind, freed from the guidance of the judgment, which is imagination, plays fantastic tricks, like the purposeless locomotion of an animal whose brains have been extracted, or of a lively horse subject to the inconstant and irregular guidance of a sleepy driver, and is like a child blindfolded, or like the convictions of insanity. This shows that judgment goes earliest to sleep. I have dreamt that I was looking at myself, another Dromio, or Antipholus ; nay, more, as two beings identically the same, with one soul pervading both. I, out of myself, would see myself with head reversed, a leg and an arm to my thighs, and a leg and an arm to my shoulders. With this conformation, walk how I would, it was always on a foot and a palm of the hand. Sometimes I walked upright, then I changed to one side, and again to the other side, but always on a foot and a hand. My movements, however, did not seem unnatural or absurd.

“ But a perfect sleep entails a perfect non-exist-

ence of the active mind, or of the activity of the mind. Now sleep, as you have just said, is like death ; and a perfect sleep includes a mind in perfect inaction. To what thoughts does this idea lead ? What sort of mind is included in a dead body ? ”

To this long speech of the German’s, Mr M’Donald replied by a quotation from the Scriptures :—“ The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” “ But,” he continued, “ it is difficult to conceive in what state it exists apart from the body. That it exists is certain. When our Lord’s dead body lay in the tomb, his spirit remained in Hades ; there was no active appearance, of these separated existences. But when the body resumed its life, the spirit also resumed its energy. As is the body, so is the mind. And we are decreed, each of us, to be like our Master —He the first fruits—and rise a glorified spirit within a glorified body.”

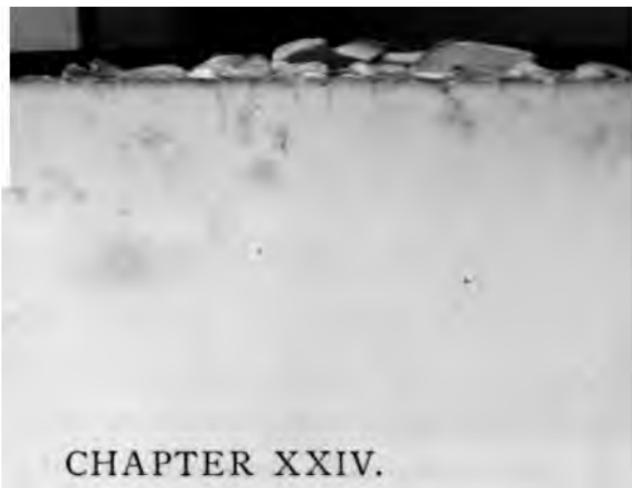
“ You admit, then, a death of the mind ? ” said M. Wilhelm.

"As an organisation the body dies, but the matter of it is still active in chemical life. May not the analogy apply to the mind as a defunct organisation, while the essence of the mind still continues its essential spiritual character, until it be again organised in resuscitation with the body?"

"But," suggested the German, "what becomes of its indestructible character, if the mind dies?"

"Just what becomes of disorganised matter; it retains its essential properties. Death and annihilation are not synonymous. I understand death to be change in existence merely."

Thus the German and the Scotchman conversed until each dropped off to sleep. The thoughts suggested were an appropriate outcoming from the sacred season—the eve of Good Friday.



CHAPTER XXIV.

AGUASSAI.

THE day following our race into this village was Good Friday. Early in the morning, I arose and inquired my way to the *aguaria* or watering place. It was a small stream close to the village, down a deep and broad ravine, which indicated that the gentle stream sometimes assumed formidable proportions. Here the village women do their clothes-washing, and retail the simple gossip of their social world of forty houses. But this morning silence reigned supreme, for it was *Viernes Santo*, Holy Friday ; and they must abstain from the luxury of bathing. As I believe that bodily cleanliness has some connection with the "cleanliness that is next to godliness," I took a comfortable bath, much, perhaps, to the astonishment of the little *Catholic* who was good enough to pioneer me to the water.

There is a church here, but no resident *padre*. One comes principally when sent for to visit the sick and bury the dead, but these are casualties of infrequent occurrence, when he improves the occasion by celebrating baptisms and marriages, and the *Misa*.

It is remarkable how these people, with few opportunities of hearing their duty, with no Bible, and few religious books, with no daily prayers, except their own private devotions, perhaps, yet seem to keep alive among them a veneration for things sacred, and endeavour, and succeed very well, to keep up those relations of mutual amity which Christianity emphatically teaches. But one misses here the noisy outburst of childish spirits on the daily dismissal of a village school, and the cheerful invitation to prayer of the Sunday bell.

Returning to the house, I overheard Mr M'Donald and M. Wilhelm in controversy. M. Wilhelm was saying:—

“ You religionist gentlemen do violence to the universal law of development. The *quod prius*

principle does not seem to be always and at all times, and in all circumstances, fit and proper. I respect age: and the older an honourable man becomes, the more I honour him. He has run the race of his age. Perhaps he has not been the victor, but with others he has been one of the competitors without whom there could have been no race. His strength, and speed, and power of endurance have been put in request, and manfully exerted. And now, as one of the *emeriti*, he rests on his laurels, and lives recalling the times gone by. In a word, he is *effete*. A new generation of racers has sprung up, taught by him, but adapting their lessons to the emergencies of the present.

"A tree grows up, bears its fruit, produces its young sprouts, and dies. Its dead trunk and leaves afford nourishment to the younger growth; they feed upon its decayed body and gather strength and proportion. But the young and the old are not identical, for everything of the younger trees is theirs distinctly, and the definition well marked. Their root is their own root,

and not the root of the mother tree ; so also with the trunk and branches, and every other part.

“ Now, some of you are striving against an overwhelming current which is increasing in strength and size every day. And why this unavailable effort of opposition to the stream ? Shall I say—It is that you may establish as fact that which is not fact. That you may intertwine young roots among the dead old roots, and raise up a body of young trunks within the decayed old trunks, and young branches and leaves to overlay the dried sticks and leaves. And this you call the ever living verdure of the original tree ! Absurd. It is worse than the pageantry of the enthronement and exhibition of the livid corpse of an infallible potentate just released from the manipulations of the taxidermist ; a mimicry of life and death.”

“ The charge,” replied M’Donald, “ is not applicable to the general body of my countrymen, who, abandoning the errors you speak of, cling only to the written word.”

“ We have evangelists in our own country too,”

said M. Wilhelm ; "but these are not much happier. You remember your countrymen, the Covenanters, the Roundheads, Puritans, or whatever they were called, abandoning the spirit of the written word, which, I grant you, has an enduring life, and clinging only to the letter, fell into the error and deadly sin of intestine bloodshed, while they vainly believed that they were drawing the sword of Gideon, which was raised only against an alien race."

Our guide, 'Nor Gabriel Vibenes, who was mending a pair of travelling trousers, asked what so excited them ; for they were speaking in English, with which language our guide was very slightly acquainted. When he heard the nature of the conversation he said :

"I have heard that heretics are never agreed, and are always troubled in mind, until they return to the peaceful bosom of Holy Mother Church."

"Yes!" answered the German, "that Mother knows well how to stifle the sobs of her children, and lull them to a drugged rest. The case of the

heretic who turns his back to the scenes and work which his Great Maker has placed before him ; and is painfully and unwisely peering, not into futurity, which would perhaps be better for him, but, away back into antiquity until it leads him whither you say, is as a boatman on the restless Jordan, drifting away from the life-teeming waters of Galilee, laboriously avoiding the sandbanks and projecting rocks, and after much weariness and exhaustion, finding his boat at last quietly resting on the placid waters of a Dead Sea.*

“ Truly it is said that the Spirit and the Spirit only quickeneth. But the Spirit is liberal and

* “ *Mare quod nunc appellatur mortuum.*”—*JEROME.*

Mandeville says it is called the Dead Sea because it moveth not, but is ever still—the fact being that it is frequently agitated, and that when in motion its waves have great force. Hence also the fable that no birds could fly across it alive, a notion which the experience of almost every modern traveller to Palestine would contradict. Van de Velde and Poole mention having seen ducks and other birds, single and in flocks, swimming and diving in the water. They must surely have been in search of some form of life, either animal or vegetable. A few yards only from the lake, Mr Poole caught small fish. He is of opinion that they are denizens of the lake.”—*Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.*

comprehensive, and excites development wrought to suit the times and circumstances of the present race, whether that present be past, present, or future."

"You," said Mr M'Donald, "who can think and talk in this manner cannot be satisfied with your unstable state; and must often have wished for rest for a troubled mind."

"Yes, indeed," was the careless reply; "weariness is my present experience after the travel of yesterday; and until breakfast time I shall seek rest for a wearied body. *Adios Señores todos.*" And so saying, M. Wilhelm stretched out his large limbs in a chinchora, and was soon resting in the regions of dreamland or oblivion.

On Saturday morning I took a walk in the village of Aguassai, principally to see a woman who was ill. A whitlow commencing under the thumb nail had spread downwards, and so destroyed the cartilage that she had lost the upper bone. One can scarcely imagine the sufferings the poor woman must have endured.

"Why did you not put a dressing of cow dung

and lamp oil at first? It would have brought the humours to a speedy head, and prevented all this mischief."

She smiled and said that she knew an infallible remedy that would have driven away the whitlow altogether at its first attack, if she had known of it in time. It is a poultice of garlic, onion, salt, and fitweed. This has since proved a specific in every instance of its application: with these ingredients whitlows might be remembered only as a scourge of the past.

The trade of Aguassai is in cattle. The men are either owners of *hatos*, or employed as drovers.

Hammocks, or as they are called in Venezuela, *Chinchoras*, are commonly of four kinds; two of cotton are either woven or laid in cords cross-ways; two are of a hemp-like fibre, and are either loosely woven or laid out in lines, and crossed like one kind of the cotton hammocks. Here I saw a fifth kind, a cowhide cut to an oblong, and regularly slit into strips of about five inches in length, and a quarter of an inch or less

in breadth, in quincunxial order, which gave the hide the appearance of network. I got into one, but it was hard and uncomfortable.

In most of the houses, preparations were being made for the morrow, which was the day appointed throughout the Republic for the inauguration of negro freedom. Minced beef, highly spiced, and covered with a crust of farina de mais, and called pastil impancida, and arepa (corn bread) were in course of fabrication.

Sunday morning was heralded by the sound of fire-arms, and there was an unusual appearance of life in the village ; not that anyone here directly benefited by the liberation, for the villagers were all free-born half-breeds, or creoles,* with a sprinkling of foreigners. It was the usual outcoming of human sympathy, which, unless over-weighted with personal interests, is always sure to float up and commingle with the joy of those who have been released from injustice and oppression. The women kept the first half of the

* Natives, who are not regularly descended from the aboriginal Indians, are called *Creoles*.

festive day in the pleasure of bustle, during the preparation and cooking of meats; the men amused themselves in walking from house to house, and in gambling—the latter half was spent in eating and drinking.

To-day, at dinner time, our guide, addressing my wife, said, "Madama, I don't know if you are brave, but day after day, as I saw you on the donkey with the trabuco in your hand, you looked to me as one of the wives of our braves in the days of the war of independence, who sometimes had to defend their homesteads from straggling marauders, in the absence of their husbands."

"Such a picture is very suggestive," said M. Wilhelm, "for, undoubtedly, Madame would be terribly frightened at the approach of an enemy. Yet the travelling in this manner, on the Llanos, would beseem, as 'Nor Gabriel says, a life of hardihood and habitude to the Llanos life, and the carrying of a trabuco would suppose the accustomed exercise in arms. It is, however, really the picture of timidity, shielding itself in the armour of bravery, like a poltroon in military

garb, or cowled hypocrisy. We, in this nineteenth century, see each other pretty much as we are; but referring to the past ages, the lives of heroes and saints are reflected with a halo of perfection; their unseemly tempers and habits lost in the distance; and so we think them purer, and honester, and nobler than ourselves, and attribute their excellence to the institutions of their day. This is why we hear of the desire to revert to ancient customs, and rites, and ceremonies, not as symbols of truth only, but as helps to devotion and obedience for some, and as means for exacting and obtaining class reverence for others."

" You are always harping on certain subjects, M. Wilhelm," said the Scotchman, " as a man never satisfied."

" When a man is not satisfied with himself, he seldom derives satisfaction from externals. But I know that ' Quod petis, hic est, animus si te non deficit æquus.' "

" But the process of amendment is itself satisfactory, and, if pursued, will be the cure you seek."

"I did not say that I am seeking for satisfaction," answered M. Wilhelm. "It would be like seeking for honesty, for Arcadia, for El Dorado, for wild geese."

"It is nevertheless a fact," said the Scotchman, "that amendment yields satisfaction inwardly, which causes one to view with charity and fairness what hitherto he looked upon in a mere cynical and hypercritical spirit. A man of fair average capacity, too wicked or too weak to wish to amend, must ever be contemptible. Well said the heathen that *mens sana in corpore sano* was desirable."

"And so it is to those who want them. But who will say," said the German, striking his chest and head, "that I am sick in mind or body."

"It cuts more ways than one, M. Wilhelm. I can imagine an athlete wanting a strong mind, or a philosopher, a statesman, a divine, wanting bodily health; but I can also imagine physical sanity carrying out in practice the decision of a sound, that is, of a wise, that is, of a Christian judgment."

"Perhaps you are right," said M. Wild, who did not seem disposed to continue the conversation; the boiled tasajo and the cassava bread he was consuming were then of paramount importance.

CHAPTER XXV.

EIGHTH AND NINTH DAYS ON THE LLANOS.

LONG before the dawn on Monday morning we were on our route from Aguassai, and had crossed the Guanipa. From the few days' rest we had had at Aguassai, we found the walk very distressing, and it was arranged that M. Wilhelm, Mr M'Donald, and I should in turn mount one of the donkeys; and that we should each have our fair proportion of the privilege, the guide was requested to say when it was time for each one to have his turn. By this mode of travelling we got through a greater distance than we had done on any previous day. We crossed the Aribé and Nabo at their heads, and encamped and slung our chinchoras on a bank of the Aritupano.

On Tuesday, crossing the Aritupano and ríos Chive and Pando, and passing eastward of the village of Merecural, we encamped on the open

savanna of the Morechal Largo, a mile from the west bank of the *rio Tigre*. We were then in the public highway, and as a deserted ox-cart lay temptingly in our way, it decided our halt. Beds were made for the tender ones under the cart, which was a convenient canopy from the dew. The men wrapped themselves in their *cobijas*, and made themselves as comfortable as they could. They had gathered sticks and dry brush-wood, which after serving for the dinner fire, was gathered up and rekindled for the night: but the fire soon failed altogether.

The whole mesa or table-land of the Morechal Largo presents, until one gets to the cultivated districts, a gloomy appearance. It is weird-like, and induces melancholy in persons predisposed to dejected thoughts.* The extensive flat surface

* "There is something sublime, yet mournful, in the uniform spectacle of these steppes. Everything in them appears immovable, except that perchance, occasionally, the shadow of a small cloud, which passes over the zenith and announces the approach of the rainy season, falls on the savanna. I know not whether the first feeling of surprise at the first view of the Llanos is not as great as at the first view of the chain of the Andes. Mountainous regions, however high even their highest points may be, have an

was, however, somewhat relieved in the distance by the appearance of numerous Morich palms (*Mauritia flexuosa*), some of which were scattered about near us.

"A quartillo for your thoughts, Señor M'Donaldo," said the guide, after rousing up from his first sleep, and seeing the Scotchman sitting apart, his elbows on his knees, and his hands supporting his head.

"I was in a reverie on the changes and chances of life. From the time I left home, twelve years ago, three years have not left me in any one place; and I was thinking that lately every night finds me in another spot, and with the consciousness of further travels; and the goal, the *ultima Thule*, Bolivar, a *terra incognita*, a myth, as far as my personal acquaintance with it is concerned. And there even, who knows how long I shall

analogous physiognomy; but it is only with difficulty that the eye can accustom itself to the Llanos of Venezuela . . . which incessantly, and during journeys of from twenty to thirty days, remind one of the watery mirror of the tropic sea. The plains of the west and north of Europe afford but a faint image of the immeasurable Llanos of South America."—HUMBOLDT.

remain. I seem doomed, like the wandering Jew, to incessant change of location. I shall one day lay my weary bones down somewhere far away from friends."

"Your experience just now," said 'Nor Gabriel, "is in change of places. I think every one must have felt the change in persons and things. Every journey I make in these Llanos finds me not only confronting fresh individuals, but old faces changed in one or more ways from what I found them the journey before. And not a spot of the road continues always the same: the trees are growing, or blooming, or bearing, or dying; and the grass springing, luxuriant, or withering."

"You feel this the more, 'Nor Gabriel, because you yourself are daily changing," said the German, puffing at a cigar that he had just rolled. "The lugubrious Señor Mack, sitting like a disconsolate outcast, is not singular in his state of continual change. We, some of us, shrink from the thought of death, principally, I believe, on account of the great change of circumstance and place—the awful and unknown state and distance hence to

which we think we shall be carried, without considering the deep mystery of our present existence, and also the great fact that we literally ' flee as it were a shadow, and never continue in one stay.' The ether that fills all space pervades also all bodies. Not an atom of our body but swims in ether, and is in rapid motion, so that 'Nor Gabriel sitting there, and believing that he is solid flesh and more solid bones, is believing a fallacy.'—('Nor Gabriel here clasped the attenuated calf of his leg to reassure himself of its solidity, and continued to gaze amazedly at the German.)—“ For we are,” continued he, “ but a wonderful phenomenon, an aggregation of dissevered atoms.* Of such like is the deep mystery of our present existence.”

* “ Ovid said ‘ our bodies undergo transformations ; we shall be to-morrow, neither what we are to-day, nor what we were yesterday—*corpora vertuntur, nec quod fuimusve, sumusve, cras erimus*. The poet author of the ‘ Metamorphoses’ proclaimed therein a far more important truth than doubtless he imagined ; and modern science, after three centuries of experiment and observation, has fully confirmed the word of the Augustan bard. . . . In the most hidden depths of living beings two contrary currents flow ; one, molecule by molecule, constantly removing something from the organism ; the other as rapidly repairing the breaches which, too

“ And see what fugitives we are. Every year we are transported hundreds of millions of miles through space, while these distances, multiplied by the year it has pleased God to let us live, will tell us how far we have travelled since we came into this life. Wherever we may be carried and whatever may be our ultimate destiny, we must always be within the limits of space, if there be any such limit, and of the material universe. Why bother then about the paltry movements we make upon the crust of this earth, when earth itself with all that it contains is flying with lightning speed into unknown space. You are sick, brother Mack, when such thoughts trouble you, and the remedy I prescribe is an antibilious pill.”

“ You are like the milch cow that always attempted to kick away the good milk that she gave,” said 'Nor Gabriel, addressing the German. “ I was pleased with your speech, and you made much widened, would bring on death. At the end of a given period, the total, or almost total, renewal of the body must follow from this double action.”—*Metamorphosis of Man and the Lower Animals.* DE QUARTREFAGES.

me to look at things in a new and wonderful way; for although I cannot understand how such things are, yet I suppose that you are speaking the truth. But, M. Wilhelm, when I squeeze my leg why does it not fall to pieces? since, as you say, it is made up of small loose pieces."

"Because," was the reply, "your hand being composed of the same possesses no greater cohesive force. We may talk of it at another time."

"Don't you, Señor Mack, feel better for the conversation?"

"Yes, 'Nor Gabriel; I am thinking of a passage of the Holy Book, that I little heeded before. I cannot quote it correctly, but it says that *in life and in death we are alike in the hand of God*. Flying through illimitable space, and with probably not an atom of matter upon us with which we were born; here we are in South America assured that as we have ever been, so are we now, and shall be for ever in the hand of God."

"Yes, Señor; and under His kind watchful eyes," said the pious Spaniard.

"Truly a Christian man should make himself

happy," said M. Wilhelm, as in a soliloquy, yet so as to be heard. " His faith is a most comfortable one. I wonder at the inconsistency of any man with the privilege of such a Faith, to cause its shipwreck by disobedience to its laws."

" I sometimes cannot understand your Faith, M. Wilhelm," said M. Donald. " You speak at once with the tongue of an angel, and with the air of a Mephistopheles. What are you ? "

" All things to all men."

" Man, are you infidel ? "

" Somewhat."

'Nor Gabriel, who had risen to drink water, and with the full calabash in his hand, his tin cup being on the ground before him, was preparing to pour out the water, took his pipe out of his mouth turned round aghast, and exclaimed, " Pagano ? " while he poured the water, not into the cup, but on his pipe.

The mishap did not tend to calm him. But he drank water, shook out his pipe, and while cleaning it with part of a slender stem, or petiole of a Morichi frond, came solemnly up to M. Wilhelm

and said, "Señor, no good man can doubt: many who do not doubt are not good certainly. I sometimes thought that a heretic might possibly be not bad; but, excepting a very few, I here renounce that opinion. An infidel—a Pagan is either mad, or he is possessed of the devil, and never can be absolved. If I had known this in time you never would have been my companion. I pity you, and my manhood only (for you also are a man, whatever else besides you may be) prevents me from saying that I despise and hate you. However, please do not talk to me at all, until, it please God, you get into a better mind."

With the horizon all around, and the clear, bright stars shining above us amid the silence of the midnight, and in the solitude of our camping-ground, the sonorous Spanish tones of our unlettered Catholic, firm in his Faith, sounded like the voice of an ancient seer reproving the sin of his age. He rose superior to himself, superior to us all; and even the astute German seemed to feel, without anger, the reproof of the guide. Guide indeed—in a twofold way.

"Nor Gabriel," said M. Wilhelm, in his mildest manner, "I respect your feelings. You are an honest man, than whom there is nothing on earth nobler."

"Honest, certainly," replied the guide, who probably did not understand the German. "Those who have said so in ill-reasoned words have sometimes overreached themselves, but I am not honest, because I have sometimes overreached myself in my attempts to overreach me."

A broad smile lighted German's face.

"They take you," said he, "to be what you take them to be, and possibly you are, neither of you, mistaken, or both mistaken; it is not likely that one party is altogether right in his conjecture, and the other totally wrong. In spite of our opinion to the contrary, there is so little difference in the character and faith of mankind as to amount to no difference. You are angry at what you suppose to be my want of belief, and with your opinions you very properly look upon me with distrust and aversion. But do you know there are many people who would look upon your belief

as contemptible, because it is so tarnished with absurdities, and is not as deep, as broad, and as pure as theirs? Ay, indeed; and there are others who would regard you as dangerous and condemned as an unbeliever, as you now consider me, because you will not and are not likely to believe you are in error. Which of the three types is nearest the whole truth is another matter; but undoubtedly a broad stream of Truth runs through the whole, sullied more or less. But are we not all, whether we know and acknowledge it or not, selfish and self-seeking? all pursuing after the same object in different ways, urged on by the same motive. And do we not all in one way or another acknowledge our dependence on the Eternal Ruler? Depend upon it, that in actual belief—in purity of Faith, I am not so far removed from many with whom you would be proud to be associated in a common faith."

"I do not pretend to understand all you say, Señor Wilhelm, for besides that you speak with a foreign tongue, you have a peculiar mode of speaking of certain things which to me is unfami-

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liar. You say in way of a question that you acknowledge your dependence on God, and yet you are a Pagan, an infidel. I do not ask you how you reconcile your words, for I would not probably understand it."

CHAPTER XXVI.

TENTH DAY ON THE LLANOS.

WE did not hurry ourselves to start, but at five o'clock gathered dried palm fronds and their large spathes or seed-guards for our fire, cooked coffee, breakfasted, and then started. We soon reached the bridge of the *rio Tigre*.

The bridge deserves some notice. It was made by rustic improvised engineers, of wood cut in the immediate neighbourhood, lashed together with *bejuco* (lianes or bush rope), and made to span a rapid river of about fifty feet breadth. We unloaded the donkeys and the guide got them over one-by-one, by attaching a rope to the neck and making them swim across while he walked over the bridge, holding the other end of the rope. It was a nervous sight to see the crazy bridge trembling, and swaying, and cracking at each step; and not pleasant, just then, to contemplate

the flow of the eddying water. But it was the only present way of getting over, so we each took a part of the load on our shoulders and went over, one at a time, to avoid excessive vibration. We had to cross frequently until we had transferred everything from the one bank to the other.

We were now in a cultivated country. Corn and cane-fields gladdened our eyes. The busy creaking of cane-mills worked by oxen ; the cracking whips and pleasant *insouciance* of the carters taking their loads from the plantations to San Pedro and further on to the town of Soledad to be ferried over to the city of Bolivar, afforded a pleasant change from the solitary grandeur of the past days. One met with carts having iron axle, nave, spokes and fellys, and carts with solid wheels sawn from the trunks of trees and roughly rounded ; carts dragged by horses and mules, but chiefly by oxen.

One would fain have rested a while in this lovely cultivated district, but our guide gave us, as he always could do, a good reason for not delaying, a specious one we all knew, still a good one.

We hastened on, and at three o'clock entered the little town of San Pedro; and took up our lodgings with a civilised Indian, whose wife was of mixed Indian and Creole descent. They had very good-looking sons and daughters.

All the houses here are thatched with the timichi palm fronds (*Manicaria saccifera*) each about eight or ten feet long, and when doubled for thatching about eighteen inches wide. In British Guiana this palm is called the troolie and is much used for a similar purpose. The spathe which covers the bunch of nuts when moistened and distended is a natural cap with a peak, and is much used by the peons when attainable. Placed on the head it resembles the peaked cap of the Madeiran peasantry. With a little artifice they could be made comfortable indoor smoking caps.

Here in San Pedro, as in Aguassai, the men are chiefly engaged in the cattle trade. Hence they send hides and fat to Bolivar.

It was arranged among us that we three should hire an extra donkey each to take us onwards on our journey, for we were rather footsore;

so we went to a Frenchman who, in addition to his cattle farm or hato at no great distance, kept a shop and some donkeys in the village. The guide, on his return from Soledad, was to deliver the donkeys to their owner. M. Wilhelm not having, as he said, sufficient money to meet the contingencies of his first days in Bolivar, got me to lend him his portion of the hire of the donkeys, the repayment of which and other small accounts, from one cause or another, was long delayed.

In the Frenchman's shop we bought necessaries for the continuance of our journey, and were tempted to purchase some luxuries as a treat after our forced abstinence of many days. These consisted, among other things, of salted codfish at a shilling the pound, and sardines at twopence the tin. We bought also some tasajo and rice for the road, and fresh beef for the morning's food. Beef here was nominally at twopence the pound, but we got about fifteen pounds for the ten pounds we ordered. It would seem that the butchers here ply their trade more for the profit obtainable on the hides, horns, hoofs and fat of cattle

than for gain on the fresh beef. After they have prepared tasajo by salting particular parts of the beef, they get rid of the remaining carcass at as little cost as possible to those who buy.

We did not leave San Pedro until eleven o'clock on Thursday, having determined to eat a good breakfast. No wonder that good cheer is considered a good assistant civiliser. I can to-day, after years of distance of time, remember our breakfast at San Pedro, with a reflection of the pleasure we all enjoyed. M. Wilhelm insisted on being chief cook, and, during his occupation, kept everybody in roars of laughter at his jokes, mimicry, and songs. The young people of the house, and the old ones too, were puzzled and delighted at the light-heartedness of the heavy German. Even 'Nor Gabriel, who had been for some time cool with M. Wilhelm, relaxed, and enjoyed his fun—the prospect of a good breakfast no doubt acting beneficially on his temper.

While the guide was absent, and we sat in our chinchoras (for they are substitutes for bed, sofa, and chair) in peace and charity with all the world,

and with a happy prospect of riding during the remainder of the journey, Mr M'Donald, in thought, probably, of the breakfast he was then digesting, said :—“ I am hankering for a settlement in this country of profusion of all the good things of life, and of ~~the~~ ^{more} civilised manners, divested of the polish of Europe ~~and~~ ^{and} civility, and yet admirably noble in all its ~~the~~ ^{and} consider the children that ~~the~~ ^{they} shrink from the responsibility of choosing for them. In fact, it seems as if I should be committing an injustice to my children to rear them in this land of plenty and idleness, and not in my own country, where their lot would be, nevertheless, almost incessant toil.”

“ You would reverse Satan’s dictum,” said M. Wilhelm, “ and rather serve in heaven than rule in hell. The parallel is rather strained. You are right to give the verdict for the old countries. Yet much can be said on the other side. We decide for ourselves, and must abide by the consequences. We, trained in European civilisation, the effects of which training we can never lose,

brought ourselves here, a place acknowledged to be an Eden, a Paradise, a What-not ; while yet we made reservations that wipe out the Eden and Paradise from the view, leaving only a gloomy wilderness. But it is a different matter if the children can each say, truthfully, 'I am here not by any will of my own ; my European father chose to give me my birth and rearing in the country of savages, in a slowly transitional state ; if I am one of these, it ought not so to have been, but the fault is not mine.' I tell you, M'Donald, that it is nobler to be striving in the van of the highest civilisation, struggling for existence even in the society of the highest type of manhood, than vegetating, like favoured brutes, on the products of a prolific soil. And the feeling is strengthened, if we consider the interests of the children that may be born to us."

CHAPTER XXVII.

ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH DAYS ON THE LLANOS.

WE left San Pedro at twelve o'clock, a cavalcade of donkeys. The day was cloudy, and although not cool, a burning sun did not trouble us as at other times in mid-day. We passed by a stream, which, the guide told us, was a noted haunt for electric eels; and he told us of several adventures and accidents occurring to man, and horse, and oxen, in wading through the eel pond. In the wet season, it was necessary to make a detour, from the inconvenience of the marsh, and the dread of encountering these unpleasant reptiles*

* "Humboldt gives a spirited account of the manner in which the electric eels (*Gymnotus electricus*), found in the basins of stagnant water on the Llanos of South America, and in the confluents of the Orinoco, are taken. He was conducted to a stream, which, in the dry season, forms a pool of muddy water, surrounded by trees. It being very difficult to catch the *gymnoti* with nets, on account of their extreme agility, it was resolved to procure some

In a few hours we were on the heights of the range of Morechal mountains, and in the vicinity of the source of the rio La Peña. The sun had

by intoxicating or numbing them with the roots of certain plants, which, when thrown into the water, produce that effect. At this juncture, the Indians informed them that they would fish with horses, and soon brought, from the savanna, about thirty of these animals, which they drove into the pool. The result may be given in the words of the traveller :—‘The extraordinary noise caused by the horses’ hoofs makes the fishes issue from the mud, and excites them to combat. These yellowish and livid eels, resembling large aquatic snakes, swim at the surface of the water, and crowd under the bellies of the horses and mules. The struggle between animals of so different an organisation affords a very interesting sight. The Indians, furnished with harpoons and long slender reeds, closely surround the pool. Some of them climb the trees, whose branches stretch horizontally over the water. By their wild cries, and their long reeds, they prevent the horses from coming to the edge of the basin. The eels, stunned by the noise, defend themselves by repeated discharges of their electrical batteries, and, for a long time, seem likely to obtain the victory. Several horses sink under the violence of the invisible blows which they receive in the organs most essential to life, and, benumbed by the force and frequency of the shocks disappear beneath the surface. Others, panting with erect mane and haggard eyes, expressive of anguish, raise themselves, and endeavour to escape from the storm which overtakes them, but are driven back by the Indians. A few, however, succeed in eluding the active vigilance of the fishers ; they gain the shore, stumble at every step, and stretch themselves out on the sand, exhausted with fatigue, and having their limbs benumbed by the electric shocks of the gymnoti. In less than five minutes, two

just set when we arrived at a small hato. A maiden of twenty, brown skinned, with long black hair, and a lad of some thirteen years, her brother, were just then penning up the cattle for the night. The mother, who looked young and

horses were killed. The eel, which is five feet long, presses itself against the belly of the horse, and makes a discharge along the whole extent of its electric organ. It attacks at once the heart, the viscera, and the cœliac plexus of the abdominal nerves. It is natural that the effect which a horse experiences should be more powerful than that produced by the same fish on man, when he touches it only by one of the extremities. The horses are probably not killed, but only stunned; they are drowned from the impossibility of rising amid the prolonged struggle between the other horses and eels. Some of the gymnoti, having expended their energy, were afterwards secured, and were found to be from five to six feet in length, of a fine olive-green colour. They are objects of dread to the natives, and their presence is considered to be the principal cause of the absence of fish in the pools of the Llanos. All the inhabitants of the waters avoid them, and it became necessary to change the direction of the road near Uritico, in consequence of the number of mules lost in fording a river in which they were very numerous. It is supposed that they can communicate their electric shock through a thick mass of water, and kill, from a distance, the prey they are anxious to devour."—MILNER'S *Gallery of Nature.*

Some of the black people of Guiana believe that, by slitting the flesh of the outer part of the hand, and introducing therein a piece of flesh from an electric eel the instant it is caught out of the water, a blow from that hand will stun the person struck by it.

active, was before a large iron pot, with a heap of pared cheese, which she was making into queso mano, by partly boiling in hot water, stirring them with two thin long sticks in a very clever manner, then taking them out, she tossed and turned and patted them continually, until she made a flat cheese, which is eaten by tearing off flakes of it. It is considered a delicacy. She made a good many in a short time. The girl placed on a wooden hook a large pan of fresh milk, which was destined for butter and cheese.

We slung our hammocks, made some coffee, and bought milk to put into it; the girl and boy watched us with curiosity during the process of mixing the coffee and milk together, for they never in that house thought of using milk with their coffee.

M. Wilhelm and I happened to have our chinchoras slung in close proximity, and a little apart from the others; and as he was a great talker he said something to me which led to my asking him why it was that he had so imprudently startled the good 'Nor Gabriel with the insinua-

tion of his infidelity, especially as I believed he could not have been in earnest.

"One cannot," he replied, "always account for one's impulses of speech and thought. There was Mack so desponding, when, at a hint from me, he evinced a faith that was amazing, which had been sleeping until then. And our guide—poor old bat, without knowing the full importance of his own saying, seemed to have feared that Mack was confining the faith to pantheism when he added the faith in a personal providence. The doctrine was not new to me; but it then came with the interest of novelty, as a ray of ineffable glory to a long benighted soul; as a blessed hope to those who were not utterly hopeless. If I could believe in the personality of Infinitude I should, I know, be a changed man. It were worth the effort. But I must stand despairingly before the paradise of thought, and be content to remain as I am. I know that you think me hard and worldly, and insensible to the finer feelings of humanity. But you err. I long for an object worthy of love, that would draw out from the

well-deeps of my affection those purest sympathies that I know are there—only waiting to be aroused into activity. But how love an ideal abstraction, an impersonal, passionless power? I did not mean to pain anyone; but the suddenness of Mack's question brought forth an answer which, without its necessary modification and condition, was more than the truth. I accepted the term of *infidel* conditionally; yet, indeed, I do not seriously acknowledge it. The religion which you three profess is to me like a broad road on which master minds and their followers have marked out well delineated paths. The path of the Puritan and of the Romanist are extreme, and not my path, which I confess is in some parts devious, as I do not profess to follow strictly in any. Yet I trust that I am on the same road. To men like Mack and the guide I am unquestionably out of the road, not being in either of their paths. To you I may possibly be only too heterodox."

"What is your difficulty?" I asked.

"I put it by way of a question. Does God know and care for me personally?"

"Why not? You do not deny that you are His Creation?"

"No. I am one of the innumerable myriads of a type, who come, and breathe, and eat, and die alike?"

"And *think* alike?"

"All men think. They do not all think alike; nor does the same individual always think the same of the same subject; but this difference is due to a variety of causes and collateral influences."

"How would you classify those causes and influences in respect of their relation to men?"

"I suppose they must be evolved either from the external by our senses; or internally from our consciousness."

"Would you place your consciousness in the category of the innumerable myriads of a type who come, breathe, eat, and die alike?"

"I would not. I see in it an individuality; and it seems to strengthen the view you take. But the furthest that could well be said of consciousness is, that it is the lieutenant, the *locum tenens* of a higher power."

“ And, if so, it must, to some extent, be assimilated to the nature of that higher power, who cannot therefore be the *cold abstraction* that you feared. And although it is only a first step, yet it is something to know that there must necessarily be communication and sympathy between the servant consciousness and its Lord. It will not be long before you gain a knowledge of the blessed truth, if, as you say, you long to love a God who is a God of love and providence ; and you will find it not less due to love Him as your Father and friend, than to speculate on his wisdom and power as the Creator.

“ A most admirable poet in describing the higher pantheism tells you to—

“ Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.” *

“ The pantheistic and kindred theories, as far as they go are very beautiful, but fail to convince, and break down at the threshold of the spiritual kingdom. To my mind, they reach only far enough to aid in strengthening the grand truth of

* Tennyson.

the creation of, and providence over all things by the power and wisdom of the Supreme.

“ And in the doctrine of Redemption and Sanctification, what a beautiful wholeness there is in the Trinity uniting perfect justice and mercy, and making ample provision for the return of fallen mankind to the image, once defaced, of the purity of the Godhead. I see no necessity to hoodwink the mind; for an unbiased mind free from prejudice, and earnestly desiring truth, cannot, I think, but arrive at the conclusions of Christianity with thankfulness and love.”

I had generally avoided taking a part in M. Wilhelm’s serio-comic conversations. I disliked what was considered his coarse selfishness; and, no doubt, what I gathered from the guide and the artless Mr M’Donald made me unjust to the man. M. Wilhelm seemed to me a kind of moral and intellectual sign-post, not very deeply planted, pointing the right way (when the wind blew it not awry), while he himself made no advance. The question often arose in my mind—*What is the ultimate course of such men?* Do they, at last,

finding others walking in the way their unbiased judgment has approved, and having their passions suppressed by age, or by the overpowering energy of increasing knowledge of the truth, follow those whom they have directed ? At least they have performed, and are performing a good work in showing the way to others, although they themselves may not be walking therein.

But the versatility of M. Wilhelm's mind, and his known obliquity in morals may have found in companions formed mostly of gamblers, and others whose sense of honour was somewhat blunted, a counteracting tendency ; and while a few persons may have derived benefit from fitful gleamings in his happier moments, of the light within him ; how many others, alas, may not his absence of good example have encouraged in continuing to tread the downward path.

I do not know what induced me to sustain a religious conversation with M. Wilhelm on that day. Chance ? Opportunity ? A divine influence ? But the serious earnestness of his manner convinced me that I was made an instrument for

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opening medicatively a wound that M. Wilhelm was suicidally striving to foreclose.

We never resumed the subject of that night's discourse; but he had frequent and long conversations with the good M'Donald, and even the old guide was glad to converse with him, and to allow himself to be drawn out on the subject of his religious faith.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOLEDAD.

EARLY in the morning of the twelfth day, we made preparations for arriving at Soledad that afternoon. The people at the hato could furnish us with cheese, butter, milk, cassavae-bread, and papelone sugar, the product of their own home ; but not a plantain or sweet cassavae. The land was fitted only for bitter cassavae, of which the bread is made, and sugar canes, and for pasturage. At least so they said ; although I have since seen abundance of bananas, other fruits and vegetables, thriving on the black sandy land of the Savannas of British Guiana. But, no doubt, with cassavae-bread, cheese, a little fish and meat, these people had well-nigh all that they cared for.

The guide warned us to provide a good supply of water, as we should not meet with any before midday. But we had vessels for a limited

quantity only. Thanking our host and hostess for the night's lodging, and shaking hands with them all, we pursued our course—glad to think that our journey's end was approaching. It turned out to be a very hot day. The sun poured down its rays upon us, so that no wonder before eleven o'clock there was, excepting one bottle for the children, not a drop of water left. The little we had had, had afforded us scarcely any refreshment, for it was tepid. The very earth seemed thirsty, being cracked into so many open mouths gaping for refreshing showers. The guide could not be blamed, for we had been forewarned ; our great fault was, that when he, an old traveller on those paths, told us to guard against thirst, there must have been good reason for it. He had to exercise a good deal of forbearance with our petulant inquiries of how long we should be getting to a stream. His untruths were well-intentioned. It was well that we were a company, and not travelling singly ; for, with parched tongues, we could yet essay some jokes on our position, and laugh sardonically at our-

selves, and at each other. My wife repeatedly made signs to me to come near and take a sup from the bottle : but I dared not. My abstaining from even a drop could alone save the whole contents of the bottle to her and the children.

At last we arrived at a streamlet, so sluggish and muddy, that under more favourable circumstances we should have passed without noticing it; but faint from thirst as we were, and weary, we encamped here. The muddy stream was soon made muddier from our disturbance of it as we dipped and drank ; and especially from the tramping of the thirsty donkeys. What a blessed thing is pain the instant after it is relieved. Think of his happiness who, after suffering for hours from a pair of pinching boots, or toothache, has just thrown off the one or cured the other, and has resigned himself to a chinchora or an easy chair. We rested—shading ourselves under some palm trees that grew thickly there, while some coffee was being made. After this refreshment we again started on our way, amusing ourselves by

listening to the guide's conversations with the carters returning from Soledad.

It was with much pleasure that at a turn of the road we welcomed a view of Angostura, as it presented itself, so broad and glistening in the sunlight, like a sea rather than a river, even in this its narrowest part.

We stopped at a posada in Soledad, kept by a lame woman, who was dragged about in a chair whenever she desired to move. Her daughter, a young woman of about twenty-seven, did the active part of the business of the house.

Soledad is on the northern bank (the left) of the Orinoco, and directly opposite to the city of Bolivar. It is a dépôt for merchandise from and to the city. The young woman said that the town was dull just then, owing to there being no recent arrivals of wains and hampered mules. During their proper seasons the corn, rice, tobacco, cotton, and cheese, pigs, poultry, tallow, hides, hoofs and horns are brought down for Bolivar, and return stores are taken into the interior. Then there is some life in Soledad.

Business is then brisk and amusement plentiful. And as the wives and daughters frequently accompany the waggons and muleros, going over to Bolivar to select and purchase to the best advantage, there is no lack of fandangos and flirtations that end mostly by calling in the aid of the padre to seal what she frankly said she believed to be the happiest time in a woman's life. Poor thing! although industrious, and, as I think, kind-natured, she was very plain; and might have to wait a life-time in expectancy of a happiness not to be realised by her. Yet who knows but that she is now the contented wife of a good husband, and the happy mother of a goodly young family; for is it not written that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all?"

The next morning, Saturday, the two men, M. Wilhelm and Mr M'Donald, bade us adieu, and with the guide went over to Bolivar.

The river rises and falls once in a twelvemonth,

and the mean difference is about forty-five feet. It was then low water, and all along the Soledad bank vineeries of pumpkin, and musk, and watermelons were plentiful, which would ripen and be gathered in good time before the rising of the water. The alluvial deposit every year left on the sandy bank rendered it productive. It was a novel idea to me to think that high overhead of the sand on which I was then walking, and on which rich green foliage, and luscious melons were ripening in the sun;—a few months hence steamers and other large ships of burthen would be plying, and anchors would be let down, and the manati and kaiman, and other monsters of the water, would be browsing, or creeping, or swimming. A six months' tenure of the land is fairly given to each, men and fishes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BOLIVAR.

ON Monday morning we left the Soledad shore in a wherry. The current of the river was very strong, and as there was no wind to sail us over, the men had very hard work. As we were nearing "El Piedra del Medio," which is a high rock, or mass of rocks, with one or two trees upon the top, and which serves as a mete of the rise and fall of the water of the river (which at its utmost is said to exceed 60 feet), and while our heads were raised looking up from almost underneath on to the mass of rocks high up in the air, our attention was called to a manati or vaca del mare (sea cow), as it browsed on the weeds, grasses, and other algæ of the great river ; swimming so lazily and lightly as to convey no idea of its strength and capacity for fleetness. Kaimans also, the crocodiles of the West, with heads as

large nearly as barrels, were floating down, difficult to be distinguished from the trunks of large trees. The fat of these boiled down yields excellent oil for machinery, and their tusks are of the finest ivory, being whiter and finer in the grain than either elephant or whale ivory.

The city presents a pleasant and imposing view from the river. Built on a circular bend of the river, and on an acclivity of solid rock, its stone buildings rising one above another, and capped by its cathedral, the city of Bolivar is no mean object; at moonlight from the point, del Piedra del medio, of the river, it requires only a little stretch of the imagination to see in it a grand amphitheatric city. Every holding contains its mansion and ranges of outhouses, with a large entrance gate, in most cases so arranged as to form an enclosure for a garden, and many of these have fountains. Excepting the principal business street or pier, all the streets are narrow, but very clean. The houses are covered with tiles (tejas). Some of the dwellings contain palatial staircases leading to the higher storey. The

principal merchants are Germans, and a few Italians, Scotch, and natives. An English consul resides there. Ships from almost all parts of the world throng the pier, and the flags of all the civilised nations float gaily before the city. An American Steam Navigation Company, under contract with the Venezuelan government, and possessing certain exclusive privileges, ply on the upper Orinoco and the Apure; each of the company's steamers arriving in Bolivar from her upward trip once a month. There are large river steamers, but are not at all too many for the large and increasing trade. They come down laden deeply and heavily with skins of many varieties, tallow, horns, and hoofs, oils, indigo, tobacco, cotton, bread, sugar, rum, and many other articles of commerce. Goletas and other sailing vessels also trade regularly up and down.

Money is easy in Bolivar. No person needs to be in want if he be willing and able to work American gold coins are plentiful and labour is high.

Here vessels are laden and discharged with-

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out the aid of carts. Four, six or eight men exert themselves to lift in a large heavy case: one man stoops and goes under, the others assist him until the load is well poised on his head, then with a gentle inclination forward, and a smart trot, he moves from the pier to the warehouse, where other men are waiting to relieve him of his load. One seeing for the first time this mode of carrying extraordinary weights is led to review the various modes, and is likely at first to condemn this; but on reflection he arrives at the conclusion that the tendons of the neck, being strengthened by exercise, the vertebrae kept perpendicular, the legs not too far apart in the trot, while the haunches, in turn, are kept as nearly as possible, in a line with the vertebrae, is the one mode most in union with the construction of the human frame; while a burthen borne on bent shoulders is a violence to the principles of mechanics.

Numerous German artisans reside in Bolivar, chiefly carpenters and cabinetmakers. In some potteries, owned and worked by Germans, goblets of a superior make and pattern were turned out.

Why European indoor workmen are not introduced into British Guiana seems inexplicable. That country has been made to be one of the most helpless and least self-sustaining countries in the world. The manufacture of every article, the simplest, the most necessary, excepting the cane-plant is discountenanced. Everything almost has to be imported. Some of the preserved provisions are insipid and high-priced, but are allowed to monopolise the place of the fresh wholesome home growth of the country. Thus the country is being steadily impoverished, the importers themselves injured, and only the rich non-resident ship-owners benefited.

The manufacture of tobacco into cigars is extensively pursued in Bolivar. In almost every household one or two women employ their spare time in that occupation, and sell the cigars they make to shopkeepers, who put them up in larger quantities to be sent to other parts of the country, and for exportation to foreign parts. The habit of smoking prevails here. The chemist who makes your medicines—the grocer who puts up

your sugar—the draper opening out a parcel of gloves—the clerk at his accounts, each alike performs his work with the “tobacco” or “cigarro” in his mouth. Even beautiful young ladies lisp the mellow-language of the Spaniard through the fumes of a “cigaretta.” Priests in their capacious hat and gown; capuchinos with their serious long beard, their grey cloak and rope girdle pass leisurely along the streets smoking the cigar. The water-carrier trudging behind his donkey laden with kegs of water is not without his cigar. On entering a house almost the first act is the proffer of a cigar. Really if smoke is wholesome, Ciudad Bolivar should be a healthy place. But indeed it is not. Calentura (fever) is very prevalent owing to the marshes and stagnant lagoons that make its southern boundary.

Bolivar, like most principal Spanish towns, has its university and theatre, its religious processions and bull-fights.

CHAPTER XXX.

A BULL-FIGHT.

THE results of a comparison between the general enthusiasm of the citizens of Maturin, and the apathy and partial attendance of those of Bolivar to the public festivals seem at first sight strange and unaccountable. For whereas in the religious processions and general festivals of Maturin, its streets are overcrowded by the efflux of its own and suburban population, similar festivals in Bolivar, although accompanied with more pomp and splendour, yet lack the thorough heartiness of those who take part in them, while the paucity of followers is an unmistakable symptom of the weak hold of those institutions upon the general public.

But several circumstances tend to account for the difference.

The population of Maturin is considerably less than that of Bolivar. The two cities are unlike,

~~is~~ forthcoming festival to be celebrated in the

town is a topic of conversation in every house of Maturin and its environs for weeks before the day arrives, while in Bolivar I have seen a grand procession led by surpliced choristers, acolytes, and priests with large silver and gold or gilded crucifixes, crosses, and crosiers, attended by dignitaries of the church with profuse decorations, followed by about two hundred persons, a few apparently devout and regular attendants—many casual passers-by who drop on their knees and kiss the hand of one or more of the clergy—several evidently stopped on their way by the crowd—the majority of which is a dirty pack of idle sight-seers; while the shops in the street are open and the shopkeepers driving a busy trade. The occupants of other streets are, in the meantime, ignorant of the proceedings until the procession arrives at their own quarter.

It was by the merest accident that I heard of an intended bull-fight or "toreo," to take place within a couple of hours from the time of my receiving information, on the square opposite the governor's residence.

I expected to have seen all Bolivar out to witness the bull-fight—the devout and the irreligious, the natives and the strangers. The balconies of the houses of two sides of the square contained well-dressed people, I suppose the native *elite* of the city, among whom were his excellency and his family, with a few of their friends.

An area of a fourth of the square, about five acres, was inclosed by a strong palizada to the height of about eight feet, the spars of which it was constructed being sufficiently apart to enable the outsiders to see all that went on within the enclosure, where the toreros or bull-slayers walked about, fancifully dressed, their red scarves around their waists, and their long sheath-knives at their sides, being conspicuous. Amateurs of the city, on horseback, panting for honours such as in mediæval times incited the knights in their tournaments before royalty and fair dames, curvetted about and exhibited their horsemanship side by side with the bona-fide Llaneros, with an ambition equal to "Don Quixote," lacking only his courage and address. A military band played.

After a signal given, a bull-calf, not of large size, was pushed out from a gate of one of the houses abutting on the enclosure. Only when goaded did it attempt any motion, and then it ran from one point to another, making not even a feint to defend itself from a kick from one or other of its tormentors. It was indeed so insignificant a display that the crowd about the *pali-zada*—about eight hundred people—hooted and jeered. The amateur toreros were assailed with sarcasm, which comes aptly from a Venezuelan.

“Now, Don Pedro, show your gallantry; the sucking-calf is brought out in compliment to your prowess!”

“Don Henrico has had enough of this wild bull. Take the formidable creature in and let the Don amuse himself and us with a kid!”

“The ladies give you credit, Don Sebastian, for insisting on the choice of so worthy an object for your lance!”

Somewhat in this manner, each of the amateurs (for whose especial practice the timid little bull was introduced) received sarcastic compliments from

"the gods of the gallery," seated on the highest part of the paling and looking down into the arena.

At last, through utter shame and disgust, no one being bold enough to play out the game with the calf, the poor little starveling was driven away.

Three bulls of a respectable size were next introduced. These gave work to the men. Several of the amateurs were unhorsed, and saved only by the timely interference of the toreros, who, opening their red scarves before the animals, drew away their attention from the unhorsed cavaliers. One of the bulls made an onslaught on my part of the palizada, by which he shook some of the men off, several in their hurry to descend fell off. One unfortunately fell inwards, when another bull coming up at that moment, playfully selected the softest and most capable part of his body, and by a gentle application of his horns, sent the man rolling over on the sand. It was a very pretty one-sided somersault that he made, caught as he was, just rising

on all fours, his head yet on the ground. It seemed as if the tables had turned, and the bulls were now to sport with men. At this moment a horseman doubting the continuance of the playful humour of the bull, or supposing that what was sport to him might probably end in death to the unlucky man, rode up and diverted the animal's attention, thus permitting the man to scramble up and over the palizada, to the great amusement of the unsympathising spectators.

After a good deal of play, during which the lances of several of the horsemen were exercised, some taking effect, a 'torero' played with a bull, now infuriated, and until after many feints both on the part of the man and of the animal, a stab between the horns killed the bull instantly.

This mode of dispatching the animals continued until the three were *hors de combat*.

A black bull, larger than any of the preceding ones, was next introduced. It was a noble-looking creature, and evidently was not intended for the amateurs, who, although they continued within the arena, kept at respectful distances from the

bull. It was then that the men of the *hatos*—the true *Llaneros*—had room to exhibit their skill in horsemanship and the manipulation of wild cattle.

The horse galloping furiously, the rider stooping low to the side and neck of it so as to be unseen by the bull, turned quickly and caught its tail, the horse leaning almost to fall on one side, the bull, in a somewhat similar manner, leaning the other way, while the horseman seemed to be the connecting link, his body and one arm extending between, then by a sudden experienced twist of its tail he threw the bull.

When the animal was down, one of the men afoot carelessly approached, and taking it by the tail compelled the bull to rise. Then there was sport to see the bull kicking up and attempting to butt, turning round and round to get at the man, who, still holding on, then changed the play by turning his bovine adversary whichever way he pleased. After that he let go his hold of the tail, and facing the bull dodged cleverly at every thrust of the horns, and at every plunge fluttering

his scarf, and while making it seem to go one way himself taking another direction.

Thus he continued until it was plainly to be seen that the animal acknowledged the superior skill of the man.

At last came another torero, who, after playing with the bull for a time, caught hold of his tail, and jumping on his back plunged his long knife in behind the horns, and sprang to his feet as the beast dropped lifeless to the earth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CLOSING SCENES.

SEVERAL months had passed since the Saturday morning on which my two fellow-travellers on the Llanos left me in the posada at Soledad, and crossed over the Orinoco to the city of Bolivar or Angostura, as it is popularly called, when I was surprised by a visit from Mr M'Donald. He had found employment in one of the river steamers trading up the Apure, and was contented and happy in his work.

“ The Llanos that we passed over in company,” he said, “ having deep ravines and numerous streams, drain naturally of themselves ; but in the wet season of the Apure the whole land is submerged, and live stock of all kinds fatten the voracious monsters of the water—the Kaiman and the culebra de agua.

“ He had had the mortification,” he said, “ of

seeing some persons with whom he associated on board as friends, fall into the water and instantly dragged down by one of those innumerable monsters that infest those waters. No man was safe either descending from the steamer into the boat, or travelling in a small craft, for any accident that caused a fall into the river or an upset was mostly attended with fatal results. This world," continued Mr M'Donald, "was not an abiding home, and he had learned to leave the time and manner of his departure from life in the hands of Him who gave life, and is the wise and benevolent disposer of events."

"But," continued he, "I have sought you out at the request of M. Wilhelm, who wishes to see you before he dies. He, poor man, fell in with a company of Germans of kindred tastes and habits, and so abandoned himself, as he confesses, to every excess, that, his constitution previously impaired, broke down. His last desire is to see you."

"What is his mind with regard to his future state?"

“ He is quite penitent. He acknowledges that his physical decay is the effect of a moral suicide. He says that he knows he has disappointed the good and wise object for which he was sent into the world ; and like a mad mariner who deranged his chronometer and steered wildly, shattering his vessel on quicksands ; so he by studying to make out right to be wrong, and wrong right, and by acting upon false principles has wrecked himself. He is astonished at the mercy vouchsafed to him of a hope of salvation.”

Mr M'Donald continued—“ A young priest visited him regularly ; they have had some arguments in which the youth could not always satisfy him, and if he seemed satisfied one day, he doubted on the next. But he has accepted the Faith as defined by the priest. I have heard him struggling with his doubts and saying, ‘ Oh, if I could have faith in Faith ! ’ But Faith conquered, and he is truly penitent. His only inducement to desire a continuance of life would be that he might amend his course. He feels that not one worthy action will precede him to the world of spirits.”

“Have you heard him pray?”

“I have seen his hands inclosing each other, and his pale blue eyes, with an unaccustomed light, raised upwards, while his trembling lips moved to words of prayer.”

“Thank God for this!”

“More things are wrought by prayer,
Than this world dreams of
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

The passing of Arthur,—TENNYSON.

I added, feeling the weakness, the insufficiency of a faithless life, “M. Wilhelm’s life is a lesson to us.”

“There were very many acts of his life,” M’Donald rejoined, “highly reprehensible. In the eyes of the world, he was a bad man, and the world is right. But I, who knew his inner—I would almost say his inmost life—loved the man; and, Christian as I hope I am, looked up to him with a feeling of veneration.”

“ I cannot,” I said, “ fully sympathise with you: for if the judgment passed upon him by the world is, as you say, a righteous one—which stigmatises him as a bad man—how is he loveable ? ”

M‘Donald replied, “ Can you not conceive a crew of disciplined seamen, ordered by a brave and competent captain, battling in a storm; can you not conceive the captain himself at the helm, watching his compass, knowing the course he should sail to arrive directly at the proper port, yet obliged to run before the wind, which is furiously driving him in the opposite direction? Can you blame him if, under circumstances like these, he be stranded on a foreign shore—or, as in the case of M. Wilhelm—he deviate from his well-known right course for a time, while the storm is overwhelming, intending, when the fury of the wind is assuaged, to steer again to the proper haven ? ”

“ M. Wilhelm,” I answered, “ never strove to combat the storm; he no doubt was, as a competent mariner, not ignorant of the course, and his private conversations with you prove that he knew

his duty. But you and I know that he was altogether unlike the mariner you describe as struggling against the storm, and taking advantage of every opportunity offered by the lulling of the tempest to rectify himself, and bring his vessel nearer to the desired course. To me, it seems as if he cared not whither the storm blew him, and took to his helm and compass and chart only when he found himself in imminent peril among reefs, urged to effort by fear, and not by a sense of duty, as he confessed, according to your report. But I go with you in a measure. I can conceive a man, estimable in himself, yet doing many things contrary to his wishes, forced thereto, by previous circumstances, which he himself had thoughtlessly invited to entwine him, until his strength was entirely subdued, and his efforts to disengage himself altogether fruitless. Such an one deserves our pity, not our justification. But after all said, the storm that M. Wilhelm encountered was of his own brewing. How happy is the man who, pursuing a course of rectitude from the beginning, and yielding nothing to mere expe-

dience, sails quietly, or, it may be, roughly, but always safely, through the sea of life."

I was, at that time, preparing to leave Spanish Guiana, as a rumour was, every day, more strongly gaining ground that a revolution, in which Bolivar was implicated, was inevitable, and of a more desperately sanguinary character than the last. A week more, I expected to sail. But if I could be useful to M. Wilhelm, I would run the risk of encountering the revolution until he recovered, or until I felt certain that his mind was settled. I went with Mr M'Donald, only to find that our fellow-traveller had just breathed his last. His friend, a German also, after thanking me in M. Wilhelm's name, paid me some money that I had, on some occasions, lent him.

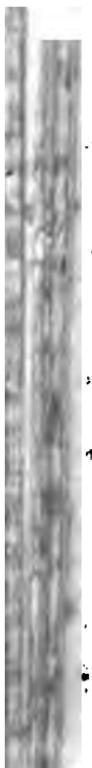
The day appointed for my departure from Bolivar, we had our traps packed on donkeys, and taken to the boat; and we were on the pier ready to embark, when Alphonso, the young priest, came up. We greeted each other kindly, and were well pleased to meet again.

"It was in conversation with a German, whose

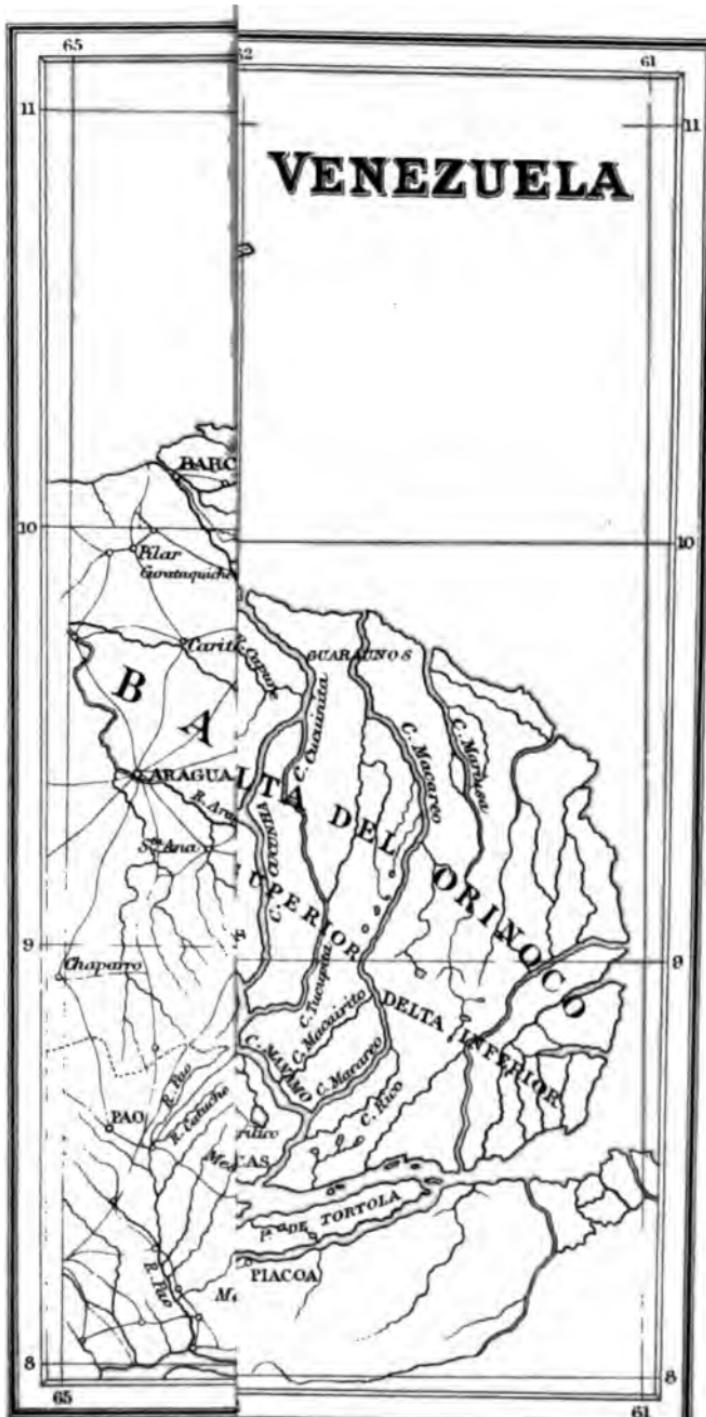
time on earth was ending," said Alphonso, "who spoke of a friend of his, so much like what I knew you to be while we lived together in Maturin, that I found out you were here. I intended to search you out, but was called the next day to a mission, from which I arrived only to-day. I have much to say to you, and to ask you.

We had time only for mutual adieus, for anchor and sails were up, and the schooner had commenced moving down the river.

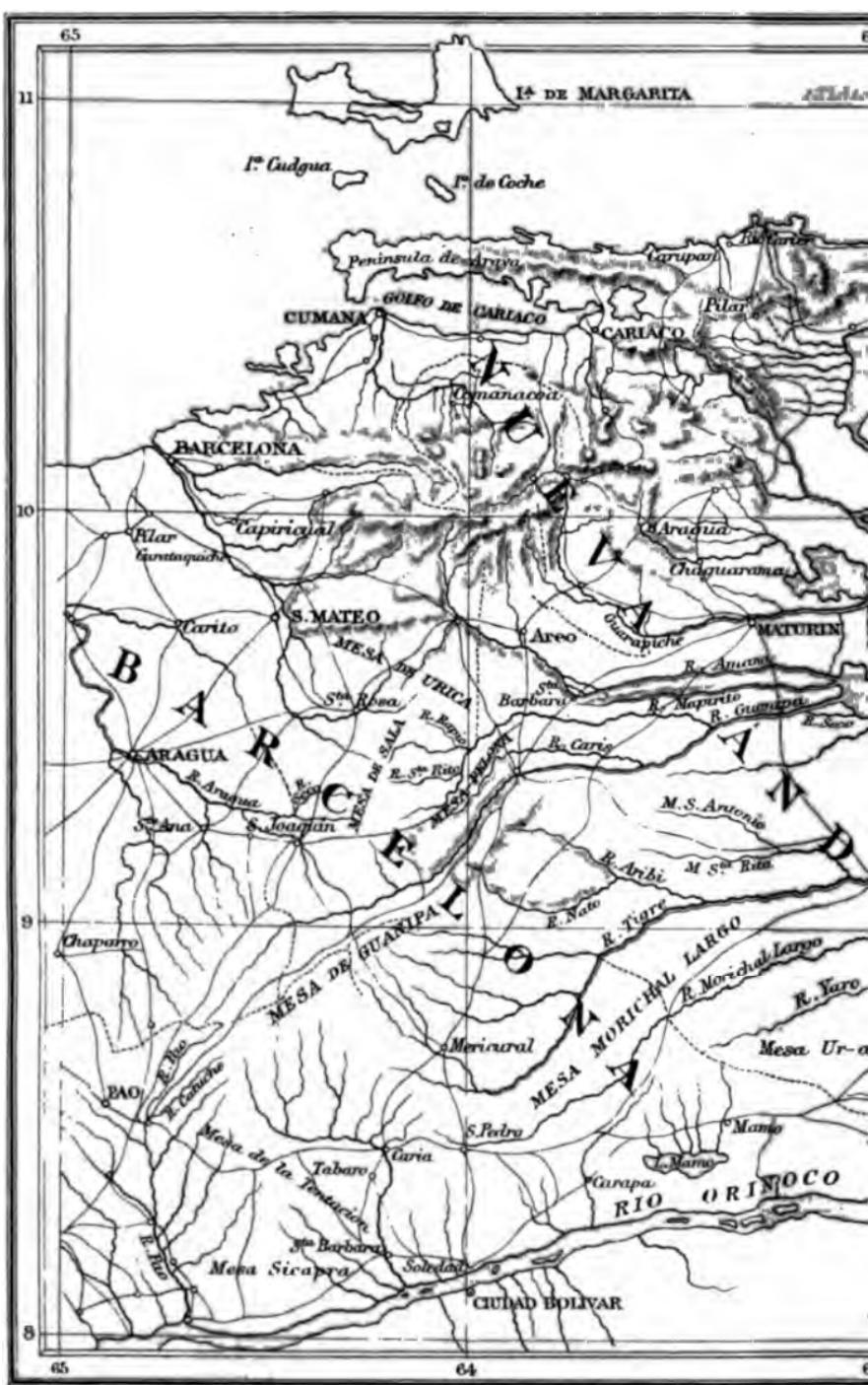
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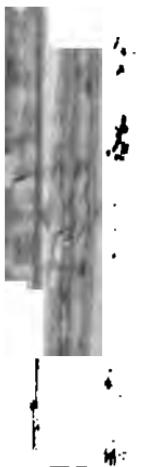


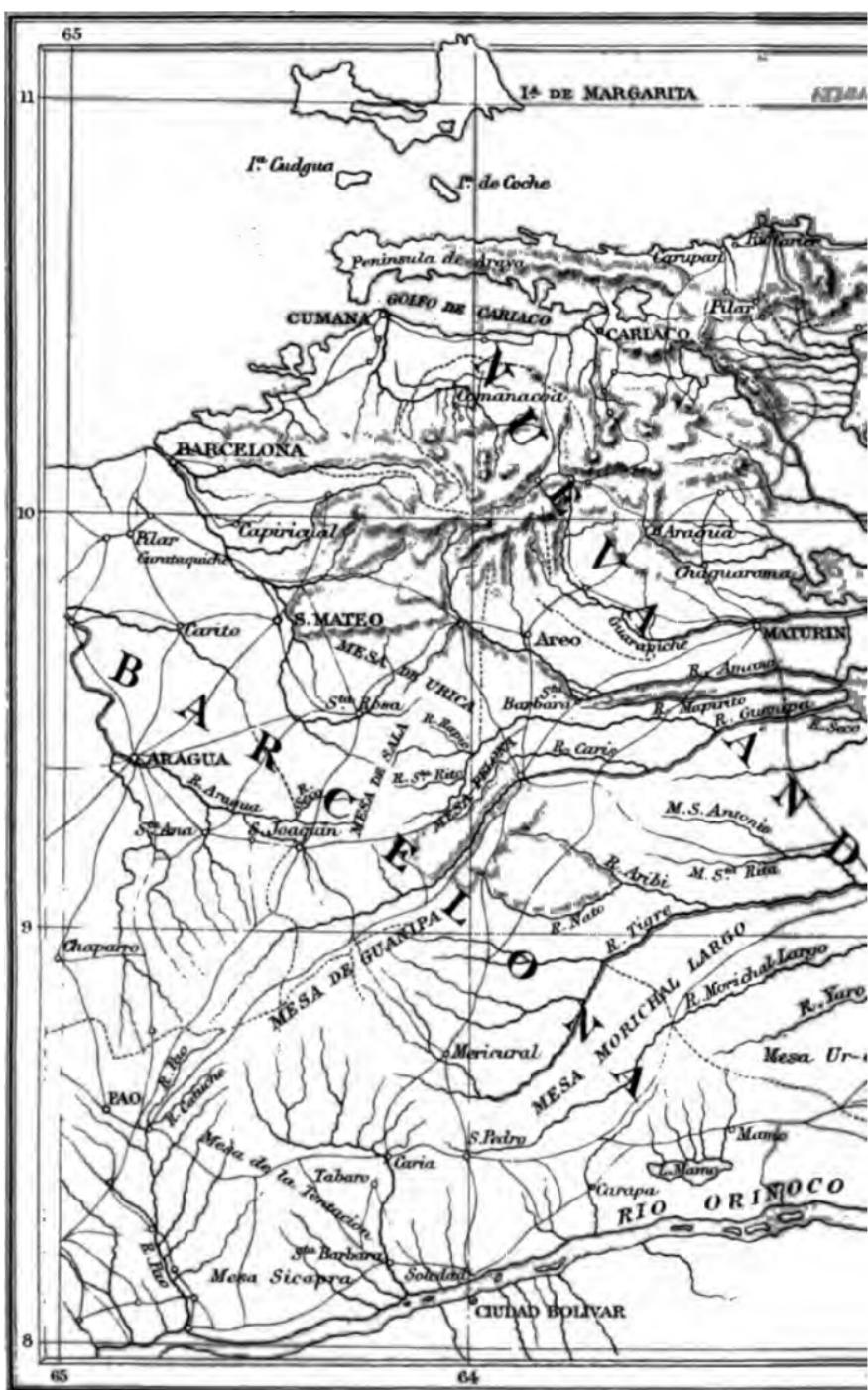
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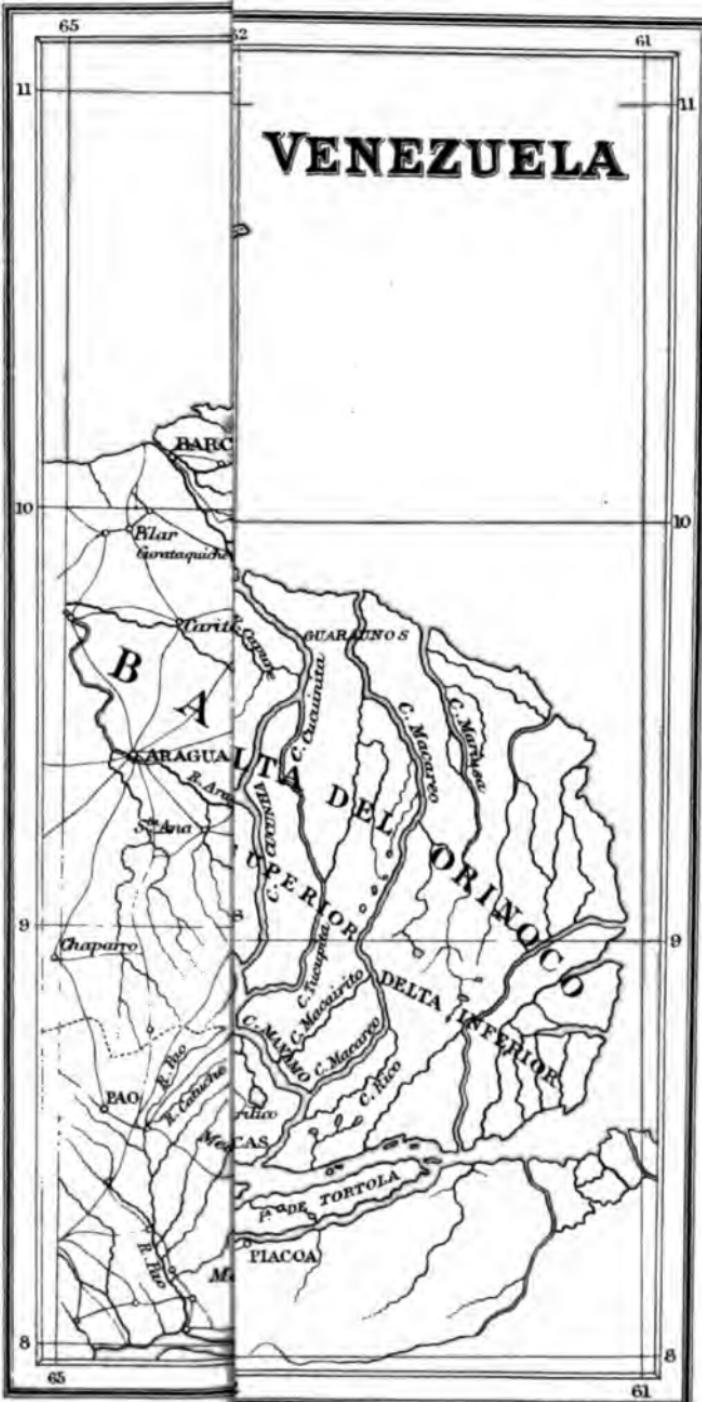






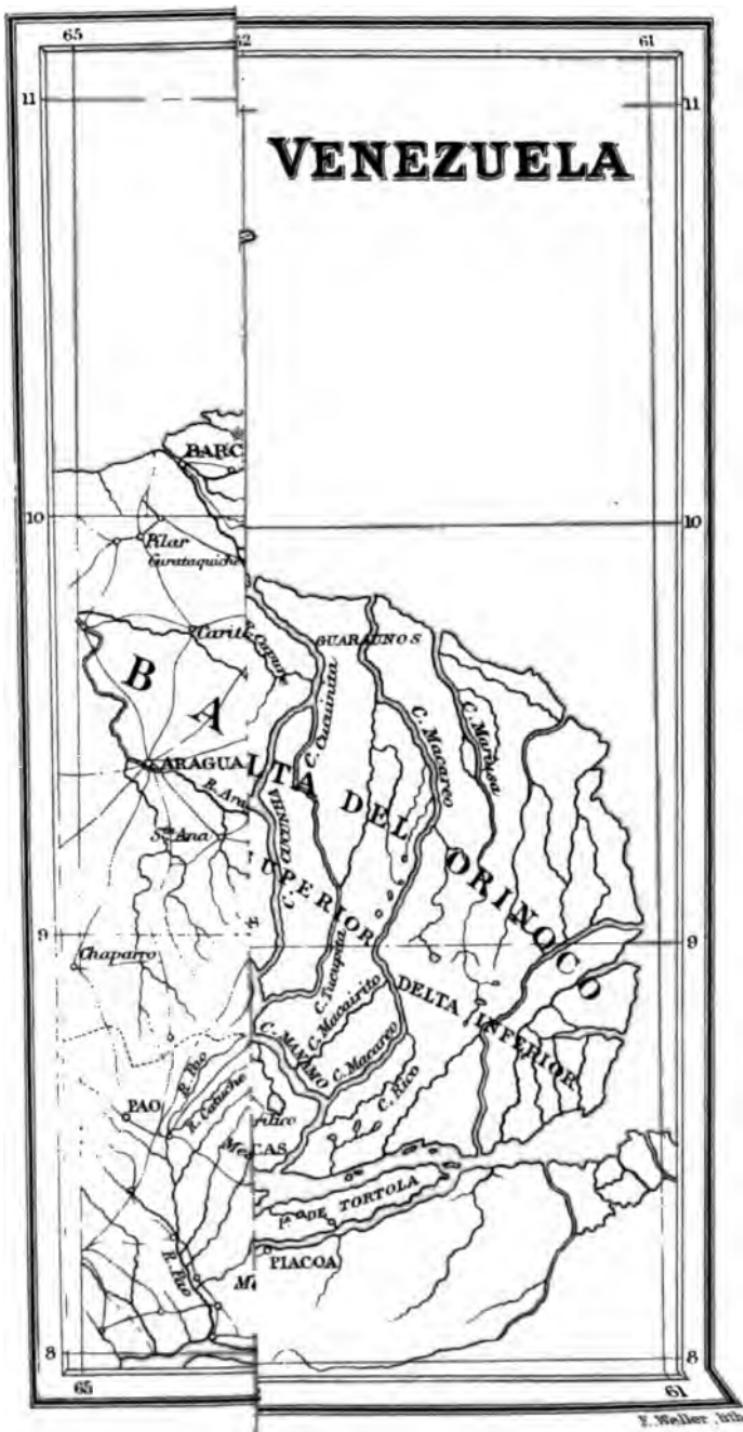


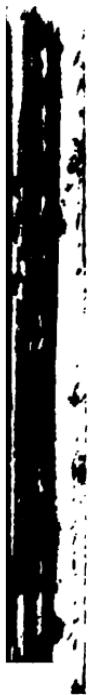
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